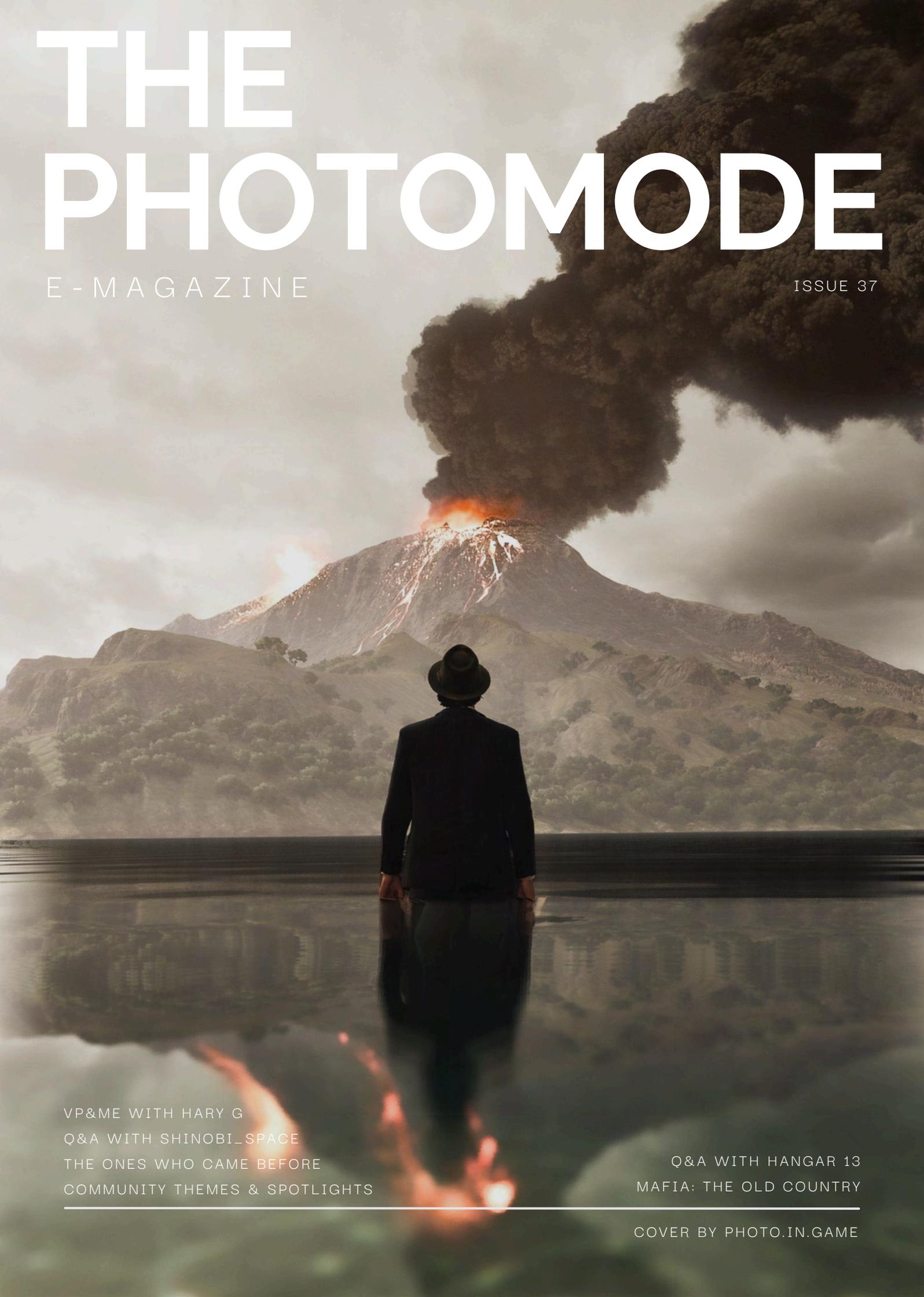


# THE PHOTOMODE

E - MAGAZINE

ISSUE 37



VP&ME WITH HARY G  
Q&A WITH SHINOBI\_SPACE  
THE ONES WHO CAME BEFORE  
COMMUNITY THEMES & SPOTLIGHTS

Q&A WITH HANGAR 13  
MAFIA: THE OLD COUNTRY

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COVER BY PHOTO.IN.GAME



# THE PHOTOMODE

E-MAGAZINE #37

We've had some time to recover from all the excitement around **The Virtual Photography Awards**. But we're not quite ready to leave it behind as this issue features an interview with the winner of the Open and Storytelling category as well as Virtual Photographer of the Year - **@Hary1495g**.

Our timeline has been full of captures from **Clair Obscure: Expedition 33** - the Game of the Year 2025 for many of you. The long awaited photo mode did not disappoint, much thanks to **@shinobi\_space**. This issue features a Q&A about his involvement as a photo mode consultant.

The TPM team have been enjoying **Mafia: The Old Country** lately and we are super thankful to Nick **@2K** for setting up a Q&A with the team behind the game **@Hangar13Games**. Check out the interview and the stunning community captures from the dark, but beautiful 1900s Sicily.

We are so happy to see the support and activity among the VP community. And let me tell you - it's not easy to pick what photos to feature from all of your gems. We hope that the featured VPs in this issue will inspire you - both through their photos and their words.

*Malin.*  
**@playpausephoto**

## 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 like one of the featured artists, simply [click on their work](#) and it will take you directly to their profile.

## Want to be featured?

Tag and mention us or use **#ThePhotoMode** & participate in our monthly themes.

[contact@thephotomode.com](mailto:contact@thephotomode.com)



## Meet the Team



**Malin/@playpausephoto**  
editor in chief  
instagram engagement



**Turið/@turidorkil**  
editor  
bluesky engagement



**Aaron/@falconsswift87**  
contributing author



**Mik/@thefourthfocus**  
contributing author



**Dave/@dprutz\_vp**  
"Ask the VP" host  
x/twitter engagement



**Bianca/@Uvioletra**  
interviewer

# YOUR VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY RESOURCE LIST



## THEFOURTHFOCUS

IN-DEPTH PHOTO MODE REVIEWS  
AND GUIDES  
[BLOG](#) | [YOUTUBE](#)



## THE VP AWARDS

ANNUAL AWARDS IN THE  
MODERN ART OF VP  
[WEBSITE](#)



## VPCONTEXT

VP COMMUNITY, 3D EXHIBITIONS  
AND MAGAZINE  
[WEBSITE](#) | [TWITTER/X](#)



## VGP NETWORK

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY PAGE  
[TWITTER/X](#)



## TOWCB

ASSASSIN'S CREED DEDICATED  
COMMUNITY  
[TWITTER/X](#) | [WEBSITE](#)  
[INSTAGRAM](#) | [BLUESKY](#)



## THE PHOTOMODE

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY/MAGAZINE  
[TWITTER/X](#) | [WEBSITE](#)  
[INSTAGRAM](#) | [BLUESKY](#)



## VP INSPIRED

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY PAGE  
[BLUESKY](#)



## SOCIETY OF VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

COMMUNITY GALLERY  
[INSTAGRAM](#)

VPM

## VP MINIMALISM

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
MINIMALISM TIPS AND TRICKS  
[INSTAGRAM](#) | [TWITTER/X](#)



## CAPTURED COLLECTIVE

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY  
[INSTAGRAM](#) | [BLUESKY](#)  
[TWITTER/X](#) | [WEBSITE](#)



## VP REPOST

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY PAGE  
[BLUESKY](#)



## PHOTOMODE AWARDS

PHOTOMODE AWARD SHOW  
[TWITTER/X](#) | [WEBSITE](#)  
[INSTAGRAM](#) | [BLUESKY](#)

# YOUR VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY RESOURCE LIST



## SPECTRAL\_LENS

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY EDITING  
GUIDES  
[YOUTUBE](#)



## SHINOBI SPACE

INTERVIEWS, PORTFOLIO, PHOTO  
MODE CONSULTING  
[WEBSITE](#) | [YOUTUBE](#)



## R/PHOTOMODEPHANTOMS

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
[SUBREDDIT](#)



## VP IN BW

DEDICATED TO BLACK AND  
WHITE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
[TWITTER/X](#)



## ANNA WHITE

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
CHALLENGES  
[YOUTUBE](#) | [TWITTER/X](#) | [INSTAGRAM](#)



## POLARIS ADVENTURER

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY/WEEKLY THEMES  
[TWITTER/X](#)



## R/VIRTUALPHOTOGRAPHERS

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
[SUBREDDIT](#)



## MIR\_OR\_IMAGE

TEACHING REAL WORLD  
PHOTOGRAPHY USING VIDEO  
GAME PHOTOMODE  
[YOUTUBE](#)



## PHOTO MODE REVIEWS

PHOTOMODE REVIEWS  
AND MORE  
[YOUTUBE](#)



## ANTICOWL

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
CAPTURING (PC) GUIDES  
[BLOG](#)



## SPACE FROG TUESDAYS

STARFIELD VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
COMMUNITY/WEEKLY THEMES  
[TWITTER/X](#)

# 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. Aaron is a keen virtual photographer and loves to post his journey through Assassin's Creed.

Every month Aaron and his team pick their favourite Assassin's Creed shots and showcase them on The Ones Who Came Before website as an article.

Their aim is to promote virtual photography and talented content creators within the community. This issue will be sharing their top picks from the previous months along with Aaron's writing.

You can participate either by using **#ACFirstCivVP** or by tagging **@acfirstciv** in your shots on X, BlueSky or Instagram.

All previous articles and more about the Community can be found here:

[THEONESWHOCAMEBEFORE.COM](https://THEONESWHOCAMEBEFORE.COM)





Assassin's Creed Shadows already possessed a vast array of environments, all unique and beautifully crafted. So, I became quite intrigued by a darker tone heading into the Claws of Awaji DLC.

Afterall, Ubisoft Bordeaux did produce very creepy sections in the Wrath of the Druids expansion. It's always important to have a balance though and that is where this elegant capture comes in.

The composition is exquisite and the colours dreamy. The Autumnal trees look very impressive with their red hue. I love the addition of fog in the distance to add mystery to Naoe's path.

For me the white outfit complements the capture so well, drawing the eye into the centre. This shot has been executed brilliantly, bringing a calmness to proceedings.

### A Stillness

VP Artist @Hotkey2435

ASSASSIN'S CREED SHADOWS

For me Assassin's Creed Mirage not only brought the nostalgia back to the franchise, but it also harnessed the vibes we experienced in Assassin's Creed Origins.

The base game and this fantastic DLC are a platform to show how much love and attention went into the development process. The depth of field is such a contributor to why this shot is so magnificent.

The tomb of Lihyan looks majestic in the arid desert. I really like the colour palette here because it makes you feel the harshness of the environment Basim is exploring.



Tomb Raider

VP Artist @capturedby.allister  
ASSASSIN'S CREED MIRAGE



For all the love I hold for Assassin's Creed Origins I have never played the Curse of the Pharaohs DLC. I was so hooked on the main game and then the Hidden Ones that I completely skipped it.

This set of photos really sells the second expansion. It's hazy feel and giant statues represent a world filled with Gods. The eclipse is absolutely stealing the show with its impact spread across all three photos. Quite remarkable placement each time.

The Middle capture is the hero shot with the silhouette of Queen Nefertiti facing that powerful solar eclipse.

### Curse of the Pharaohs

VP Artist @charapof

ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS



Defensive Stance  
VP Artist @OpticsShatter  
ASSASSIN'S CREED SHADOWS



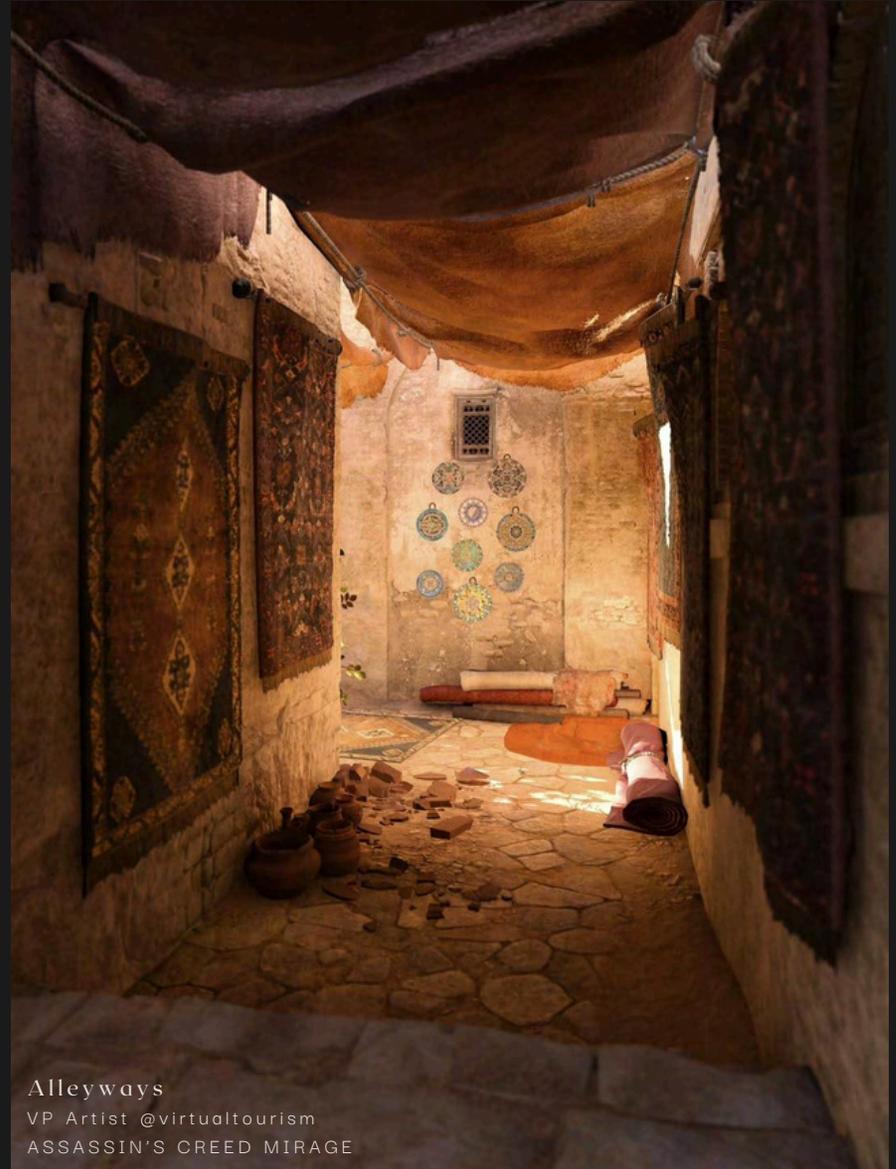
Jumping In  
VP Artist @StormSpider2022  
ASSASSIN'S CREED MIRAGE



Surveying the Area  
VP Artist @X SpartanAimeeX  
ASSASSIN'S CREED SHADOWS



Tales from Greece  
VP Artist @Birgamerinalbu1  
ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS



Alleyways  
VP Artist @virtualtourism  
ASSASSIN'S CREED MIRAGE



Golden Sky  
VP Artist @cop\_filipvp  
ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY



THEONESWHOCAMEBEFORE



ACFIRSTCIV

INMOSTvp

# MAFIA

## THE OLD COUNTRY



mafiagame



mafiagame



2K Hangar 13

Some games really beg to be photographed. Mafia: The Old Country is one of them. The stunning views, the action, the architecture and outfits are all perfect subjects for virtual photography. Luckily the team behind the game decided to add a photo mode. In this Q&A **Digo Silva**, Gameplay Engineer and **Francis Leo Tabio**, Lead UX Designer tell you why.

## What inspired the implementation of a dedicated photo mode in Mafia: The Old Country?

**Francis Leo Tabios:** The inspiration for Photo Mode actually came from within the game itself. We already featured a photography minigame, acting as a narrative anchor with the simulation of using a vintage camera, so evolving into a full-fledged Photo Mode felt like a natural progression from it.

Beyond that, we felt that the level of details in the world we built simply demanded it. A feature like this is a way to pay homage to the detail of the world we've built. When so much love is poured into every detail, this feature feels like the perfect gift to the players. We wanted to encourage them to be creative, step back from the action, and immortalize their favorite moments.

**Diogo Silva:** For the Free Ride Update we really wanted to shine a spotlight on the world that we had built. We wanted to let players explore and

be immersed in our version of 1900s Sicily, and as an extension of that core philosophy, we wanted to let our players easily capture some of their favourite moments and locations and share them with each other. Even before releasing this feature, our players had been sharing their own screenshots ever since launch, and they were very vocal about their desire for a dedicated tool that would let them properly frame and direct their shots, so we knew that this was something that we wanted to make. Aside from that, I think our art team did an insanely good job creating a plethora of highly detailed assets that you don't really get to appreciate while blasting through the game. So for me, this feature was also a bit of a love letter to everyone who helped make the Valle Dorata the stunning backdrop that it is, and it was our way to encourage our players to pay attention to all of the small details that the team poured into the game.



The authentic 1900s Sicily backdrop and stunning architecture and vehicles are just perfect for virtual photography. What were some key elements in bringing this world to life?

**Diogo:** I think the keyword there is authenticity. 1900s Sicily is a backdrop you don't often see represented so we knew that we had to do it justice. From our visuals, to our sound design, there's a lot of little things that go into making the Valle Dorata region look and feel like an accurate depiction of the time period. Straying away from anachronisms, ensuring that our weapons and cars felt like they belonged in the world and paying homage to traditional Sicilian culture and architecture.

San Celeste is a good example of how all of this comes together to form a town that feels realistic, immersive and above all, stunning to look at. The sheer variety of environments I think is also worth noting - you have lush forests, the sulphur mines, the coastal town of Porto Almaro, the lavish interiors of rich Italian Villas and of course, the citrus farms containing all our beautifully rendered fruits.

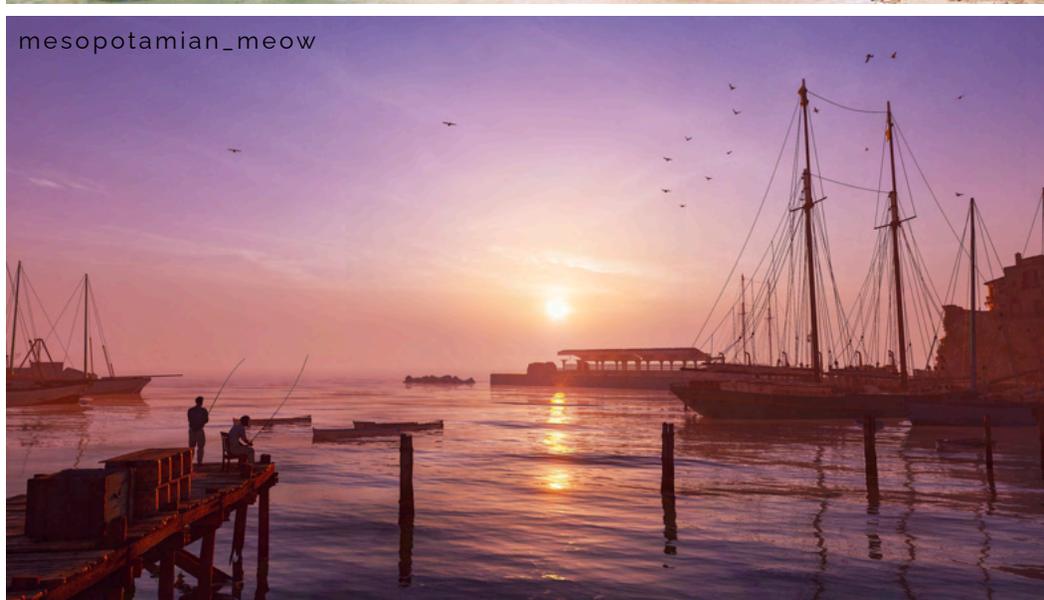
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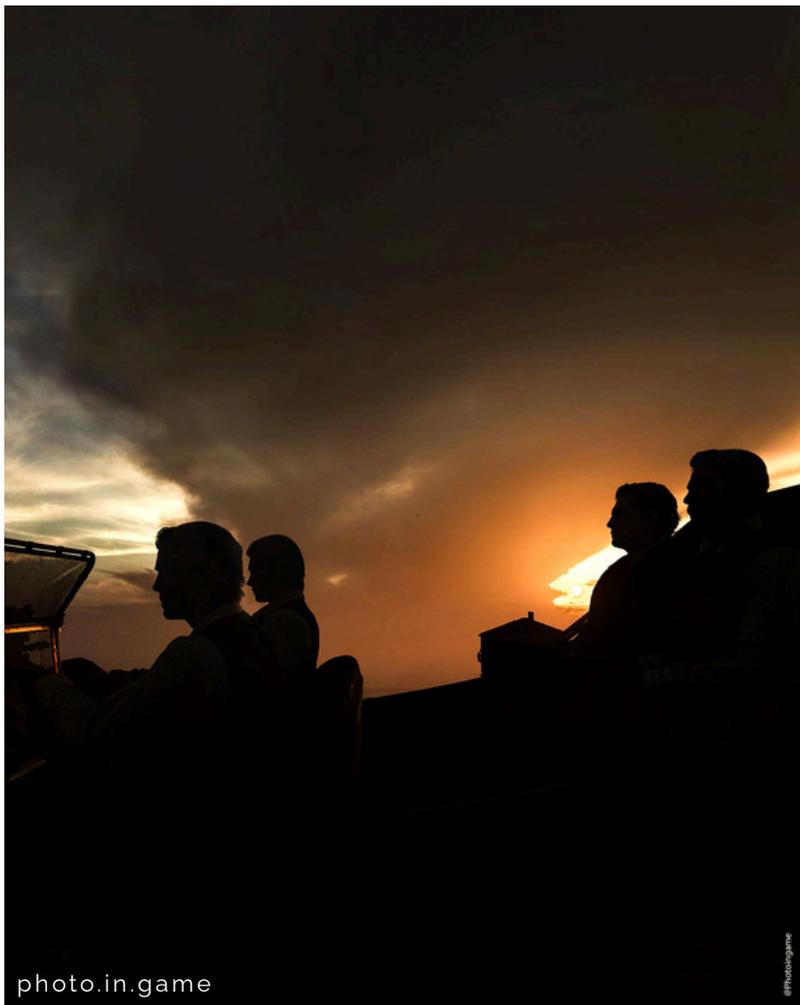


summers458



mesopotamian\_meow





What technical or creative challenges were faced during the development, and did you take inspiration from other photo modes out there?

**Diogo:** Photo Mode is a very large feature with a lot of technical challenges, so I was extremely happy to get the chance to work on it. We began by analyzing what other games were doing - what the state of the art was and what players expect from a Photo Mode. Tiny things that you normally don't think about and just have to feel out, like the nuances of the camera movement, the controls on different platforms, how you interact with the different options, and so on.

**Mafia:** The Old Country is a very visually striking game and we knew from the get-go that the inclusion of Photo Mode would come down to whether or not we could do those visuals justice. There are a lot of optimizations and temporal algorithms working under the hood to make the game look and run as well as it does and they weren't built with the expectation that the player would be able to move the camera while the game was paused. Letting the player turn the

camera around and see assets and characters that were previously not in view was a non-trivial challenge that took a lot of effort to get right.

**Francis:** The design challenge was that there is no 'industry standard' for Photo Mode; every game has a different philosophy on camera controls and UX/UI flow. To solve this, we treated the market as a series of case studies. We spent significant time studying how other titles approached these mechanics, essentially cherry-picking the most effective elements and discarding what didn't fit.

Our goal was to synthesize these findings into a bespoke system tailored for our game. This was particularly challenging because we were committed to making the feature feel native across the platforms. Whether a player was using the precision of a keyboard and mouse or the analog feel of a controller. We refined these inputs into a cohesive UX, coherent with the other controls that the players already learned in other menus, making this a tool that feels like a natural extension of the game itself.



theonlyjess\_vp



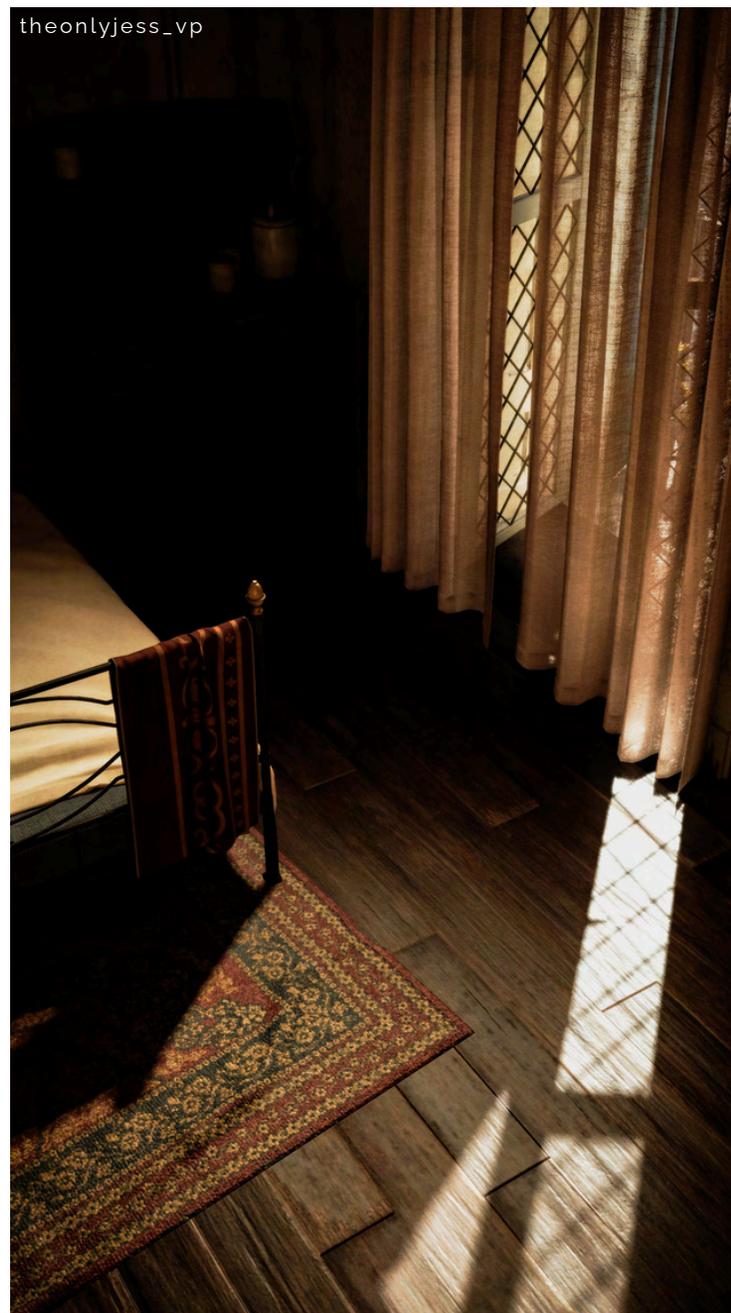
Gaming\_Brut



virtual\_koda



tinystgrs



theonlyjess\_vp

Did you include everything you wanted in the photo mode and are there any plans to expand or enhance its features in the future? For example, longer camera range, lighting and character poses are a few things that's often on the wish list among virtual photographers.

**Diogo:** For a feature like Photo Mode, I feel like there's always room for improvement. Be it new camera options, new filters or better ways to manipulate the scene, we're spoiled for choice on ways to improve upon the foundations we built for The Old Country. I think that with this update we

proved that players deeply appreciate being given the tools to create and share their favourite in-game moments and that Photo Mode is a naturally good fit for the highly detailed cinematic experiences that Hangar13 strives for.



Could you tell us about the different filters in the photo mode and the thought behind them?

**Francis:** The philosophy behind our filters was driven by our desire for period-authenticity and cinematic drama. Since this is our first dedicated Photo Mode, we were incredibly disciplined about our selection; we didn't want a collection of generic presets, but rather a curated set of authentic looks that feel like they belong to early 1900s Sicily.

Our flagship filters, such as Cinema Siciliano or 35mm film, were designed to evoke the spirit of vintage Italian cinema and early physical photography. We wanted to empower players to find the perfect balance, whether they want a heavy, high-contrast noir look or just a subtle hint of film grain to enhance the atmosphere. That is

why we ensured that the tools remained versatile, giving the player full control over filter intensity.

**Diogo:** We knew we wanted to give players the ability to create photos that looked like they could've been taken by a real world early 1900s camera. When discussing what features to include we tried to be as extensive as possible and to give players as many sliders to tweak as we could whilst leveraging the power of Unreal Engine in the time that we had. We got particularly creative when it came to our filter presets and just tried to have some fun with it. The 35mm film is one of my personal favorites, and I really like the fact that if you turn the Filter Intensity slider all the way to the left you get a negative.

The game has a linear narrative and gameplay with a cinematic feel to it. What were your thoughts on balancing creative freedom of the photo mode while maintaining the games storytelling integrity?

**Diogo:** Right from the inception of Photo Mode we knew we wanted to enable Photo Mode for both Free Ride mode, but also during our story missions. The team created a lot of very cool set pieces and unique locations that you get to explore during the campaign that we wanted to let players capture. This created some additional challenges that we had to overcome as we had to ensure that gameplay was wholly unaffected - story beats still had to play on cue, NPCs behaviors had to remain unaltered, combat encounters couldn't be exploited, and certain out of bound areas that were normally inaccessible during regular gameplay couldn't be visible with the mode's flying camera.

We couldn't modify the existing game or the world, so in the end we accomplished this by limiting how far the player can move the camera away from the main character, especially when moving vertically, and by blocking Photo Mode during certain key moments. This was a hard thing to balance since we didn't want to restrict Photo Mode too much, but we also had to ensure that we always presented the game in the best way possible.



saskia.s.photo.world



reddeadgem





What are some of your favourite places, architectures or even characters, in the game that you think deserve to be photographed? And what kind of photos would you like to see more of?

**Diogo:** As Isabella would say, the Valle Dorata has no shortage of gorgeous places worthy of being captured, from the rural farms, to the old ruins, to the insanely detailed interiors. And I must say, the community has done a really good job of finding some sights that lie outside the beaten path.

Personally, one place in particular that comes to mind is the salt flats on the outskirts of Porto Almaro - I love the contrast of the red piles of salt against the Sicilian coast. I was very happy to see that we chose to use that location as the backdrop for one of our new Freeride races, so I encourage our players to try to capture some exciting shots while trying to out speed their opponents (there's even a ramp there they can use for some cool airborne shots).

Aside from that, I'd love to see some pictures of our more action-packed scenarios - the car chases, horse races, the knife duels, the gun fights, I think our team did a really good job creating some cool set pieces that definitely deserve to be photographed.

How have your players responded to the new photo mode feature?

**Diogo:** Player response has been nothing short of amazing. Mafia ToC was the first AAA game I was a part of so it still feels surreal being able to see so many players interact with something that you helped build. After the release I spent no short amount of time going through the Mafia subreddit, seeing all the breathtaking shots of the Valle Dorata being shared by our community.

For me, this is the coolest thing about being a game developer - giving your all to make experiences that resonate with players, and seeing what people do with it. The fact that our players are immensely passionate and care deeply about the franchise also helps, but I was genuinely awestruck by seeing how many people were engaging with something that I helped make.





VP&ME WITH  
**HARY** 

Meet Hary G - two times category winner and Virtual Photographer of the Year at the VP Awards 2025. What does winning an award like this mean and where does all the inspiration and creativity come from? Find out in this issue's VP&ME.



Hary1495g



Hary1495



hary1495

Congratulations on winning “Virtual Photographer of the Year”, as well as the Storytelling and Open category, in the VP Awards 2025! What does winning an award such as this mean to you?

Thank you! I look at winning an award in any thing as a consolation for your hard work and progress made throughout the years. There’s been so many good work put out there during the awards, there can be no real winner in my opinion. But at the same time, it’s good to have your work finally have some sort of an end result.

The competition is getting fierce with each year so, it’s very inspirational to look at other work from people even ones that didn’t win or get shortlisted. But just looking through the submissions was really something! Each year there’s so much talent on show and it keeps getting better and better!

Could you tell us a little about yourself and your VP journey?

Not much to say about myself except: I spend my free time either with doing 3D Renders or some artworks here and there - mostly with oil on canvas. (I don’t post those, as it’s just as personal projects.)

And I like the peace and quiet more than a loud environment with too many people. Listening to some music to get some inspirations and TV shows during the weekends.

I started VP as casual/fun back in late 2021 and was just taking normal shots just for the fun of it. I then came across accounts of Berdu, Jim2point0 and Otis\_inf and their work and the tools. It gave me more insight on VP and what are the tools being used. So, I started with those. And then I got to join the Framed Community in late 2022, which was a really big part for me personally in improving a lot throughout the years. Also meeting a lot of amazing VPs there was very inspirational! I started to try different styles, experiment with colors in different games and practiced whenever there’s time till now!





What is the process behind your photos - do you usually start with an idea, or do you capture moments spontaneously?

I generally don't have any pre-planning for shots unless it's something story based where I have a concept for the character. Then I go in with an idea and if it doesn't work out, keep trying different concepts but without changing the story as that's crucial. Other than that, I mostly try the tourist style of shooting pics as you come across them or save ideas for a second playthrough. I have some notes written for some games where I wish to play it normally but then have bigger ideas for the next play.

Example with Red Dead Redemption 2 since I had finished the game entirely before I started to shoot. I had the time to fly around the map and mod the game to just take shots which always started with an idea or a theme or story.

Same with Cyberpunk. Working with planned concepts is fun when it works out as planned! Sometimes it doesn't, but that's the beauty of it - to keep trying different ideas.

Your shots have a cinematic quality and your compositions are always striking – what techniques do you use to accomplish that?

My main inspirations are from movies and Directors of Photography who worked on my favourite movies. So I look through their work and gather ideas on style and compositing and add my own flavor to it, to make it different in VP. I study through people who worked in photography and movies, listen to their podcasts, check their work in photography - their own inspirations are always interesting to learn from and experiment with.

Obviously I can't get the same result in games compared to real world scenarios. But having something like that helps to give a boost in motivation, to keep working on something interesting! And with shaders in Reshade getting more and more closer to real world results, especially like the IGCSDoF, it's really fun to try and do something that resembles "cinematic/photograph" and reflects real world properties - but in VP form if that makes sense.





We see a steady stream of amazing captures of many different games from you – what keeps you motivated and do you have a favourite game that you come back to?

I think the main motivation would be, whatever game I'm shooting, just being really fun to play and has a good story with it! I can't enjoy shooting a game which I don't find fun to play. So, if a game has a really engaging story, characters, buildup, music and so on - then I find I'm more invested to shoot and get some ideas on the way and replay it once finished to experiment more stuff with it.

As for a favorite game, to name a few: Red Dead Redemption 2, Kingdom Come Deliverance 2, Cyberpunk and Final Fantasy VII series are probably the most fun I've had both game wise and vp wise!

Who and what has been your biggest influence and inspiration in virtual photography?

When it comes to VP, as I said before, I mainly got into it after seeing the works of Berdu, Jim2point0 and Otis\_Inf. They were the very first inspirations for me to even begin VP and taking it seriously after seeing what can be achieved in games with the right tools and techniques.

After that I started to get some more inspirations from photographers and cinematographers with different visual styles, so that was interesting to try some from the real world into VP at the start!

What is your biggest challenge in VP, and do you have a goal you would like to achieve?

I think to answer that, I view things more as inspiring than challenging. It's more fun to achieve the results that way than getting burnt out or hit a dead end trying to get something right. Trying out different ideas from real world can be considered a challenge but it can't be done without having the motivation or be inspired by the idea in the first place. So, with the right mindset, challenge can become something fun to do.

What advice could you give to other virtual photographers who would like to improve?

I'm not the right person to give advice, but I will say this: Having your own style, whatever it may be, is the best way to go with VPI! This being an art, it's always interesting to see different perspectives from people for the same game.

There's no right or wrong but just pictures taken in view of each unique individual. Obviously there's to do with practicing the techniques, composition, etc. But sticking with your own unique style or finding what suits you better with shots goes a long way! Can be anything with colors, stylized shots, unique tones fitting to each VP, stories, and so on!

X Hary1495g    hary1495    Hary1495



flacko.raf  
*Ghost of Tsushima*

#TPM  
#BestOf2025

"Everywhere I went in Dogtown, I always found my focus drawn to this statue. Its silhouette is unique and feels almost out of place - an art piece contrasted with the construction & destruction around it. Placing Judy on top to gaze out felt like a natural fit.

I experimented with every angle at different times of day & this shot stood out. This is one of my favourite pictures I've taken so far, from one of my favourite games."

PhotoModeColin  
Cyberpunk 2077



laceplaysgames  
Split Fiction



mrclld.vp  
Ghost of Yotei

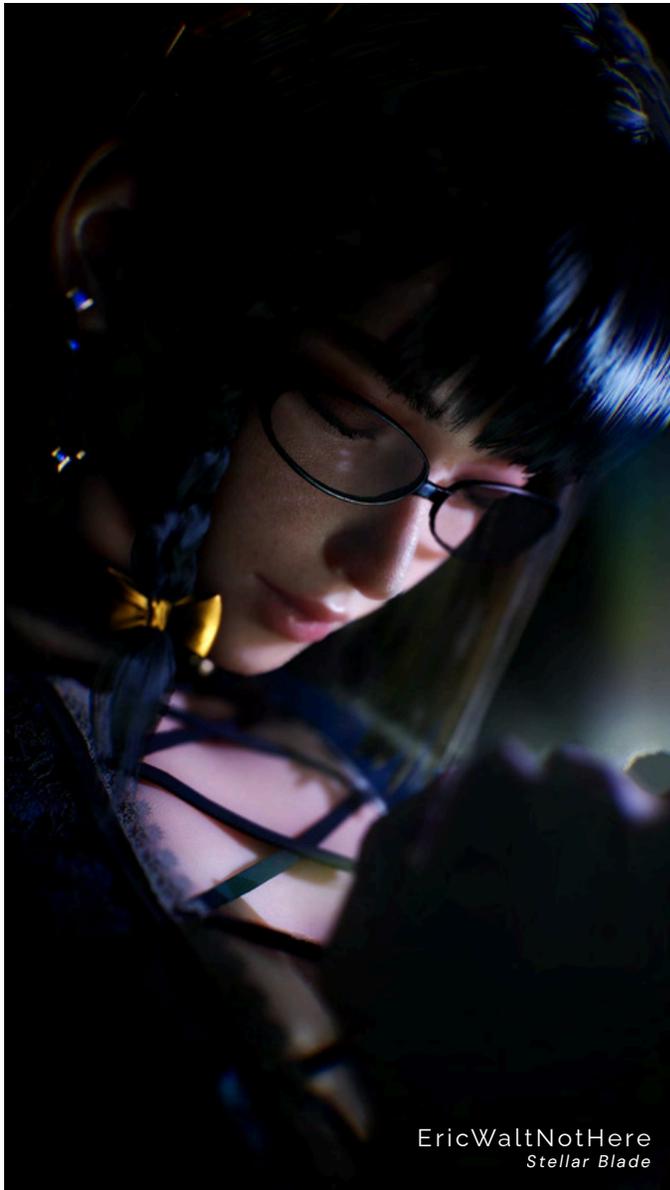


ShotByBudi  
Elden Ring





verendrye\_vp  
Cyberpunk 2077



EricWaltNotHere  
Stellar Blade



thefrostysm  
Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora

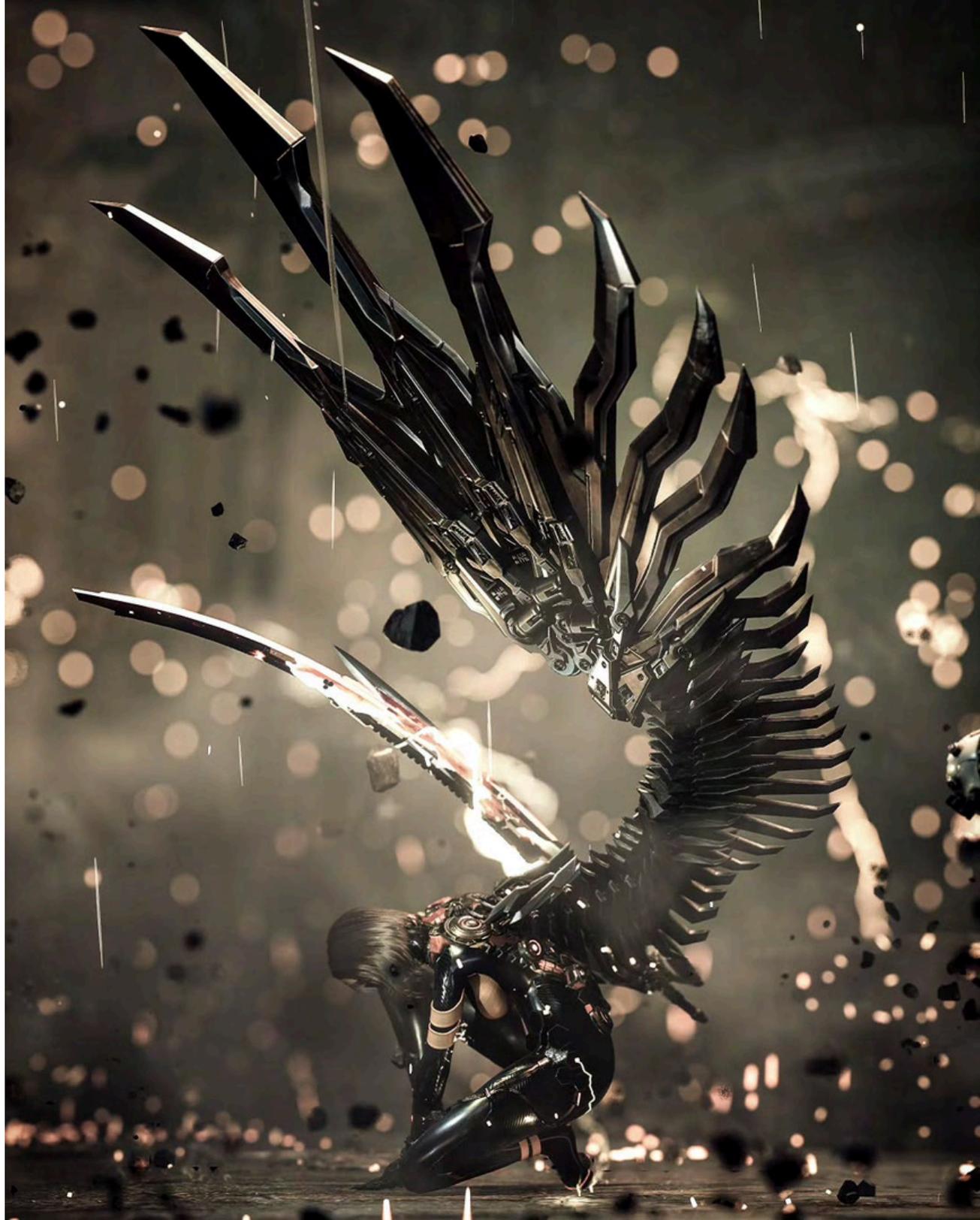
**THEME  
SPOTLIGHT**

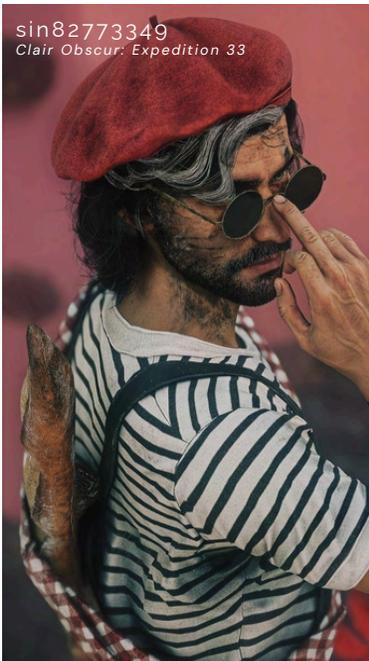
"When I first saw Eve in Tachy Mode, her armor immediately stood out as visually striking and highly photogenic. The one-winged armor is my favorite design in the game, and I wanted to create a vertical composition where that wing could fully dominate the frame.

Tachy Mode animations are fast, and the biggest challenge was finding the right moment where that wing could fully dominate the frame.

I also found inspiration in the character Cha Hyun-su from the Korean series Sweet Home. Both him and Eve temporarily enter a one-winged form that grants them extreme power. Capturing Eve in this moment felt like freezing that transformation."

secondcaptures  
*Stellar Blade*





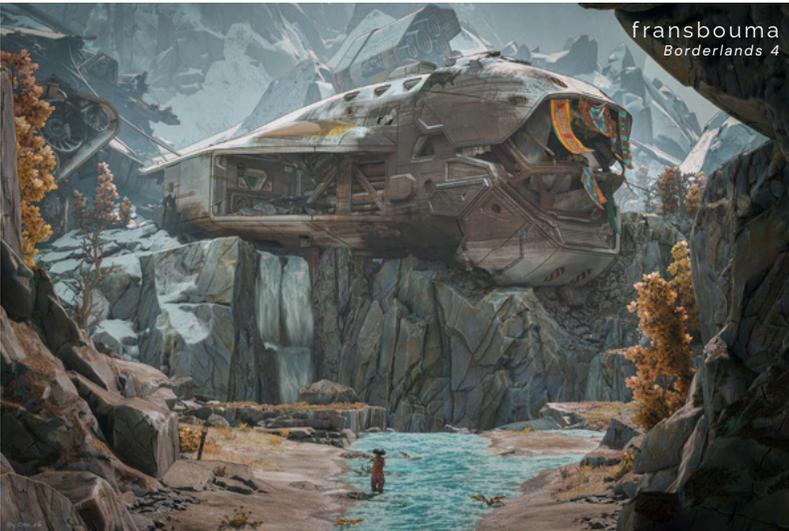
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*Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*



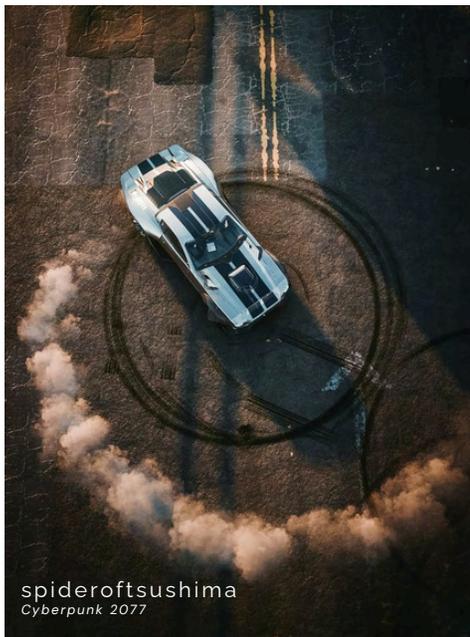
jens-nb  
*Ghost of Tsushima*



azurearkangel829  
*Assassin's Creed Shadows*



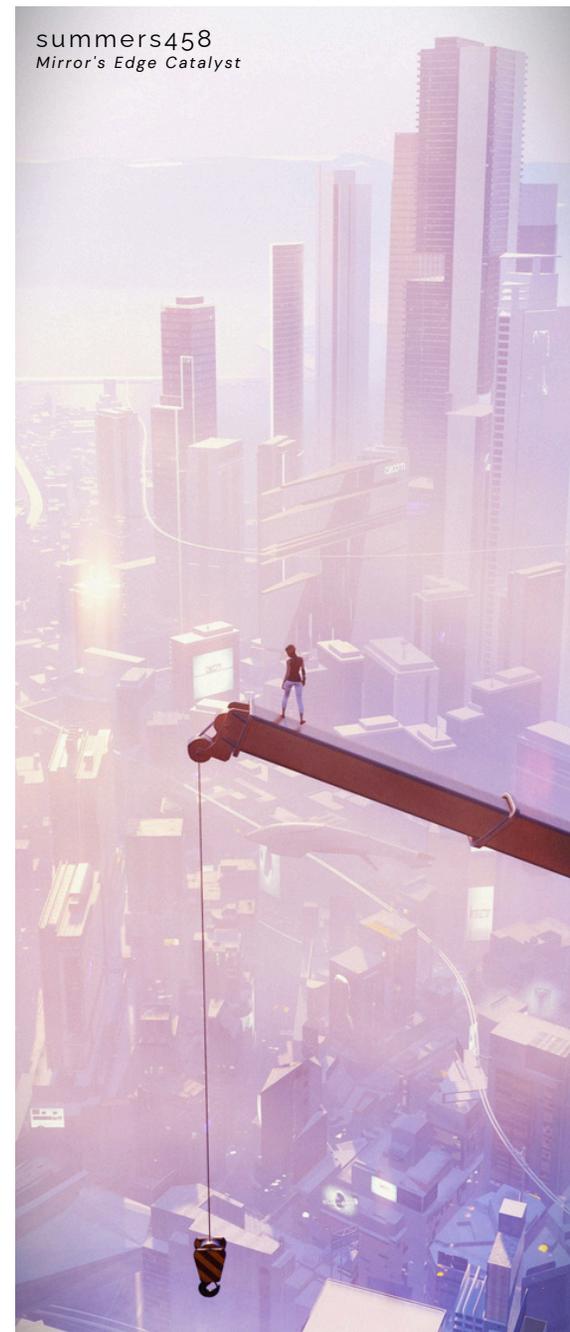
fransbouma  
*Borderlands 4*



spideroftsushima  
*Cyberpunk 2077*



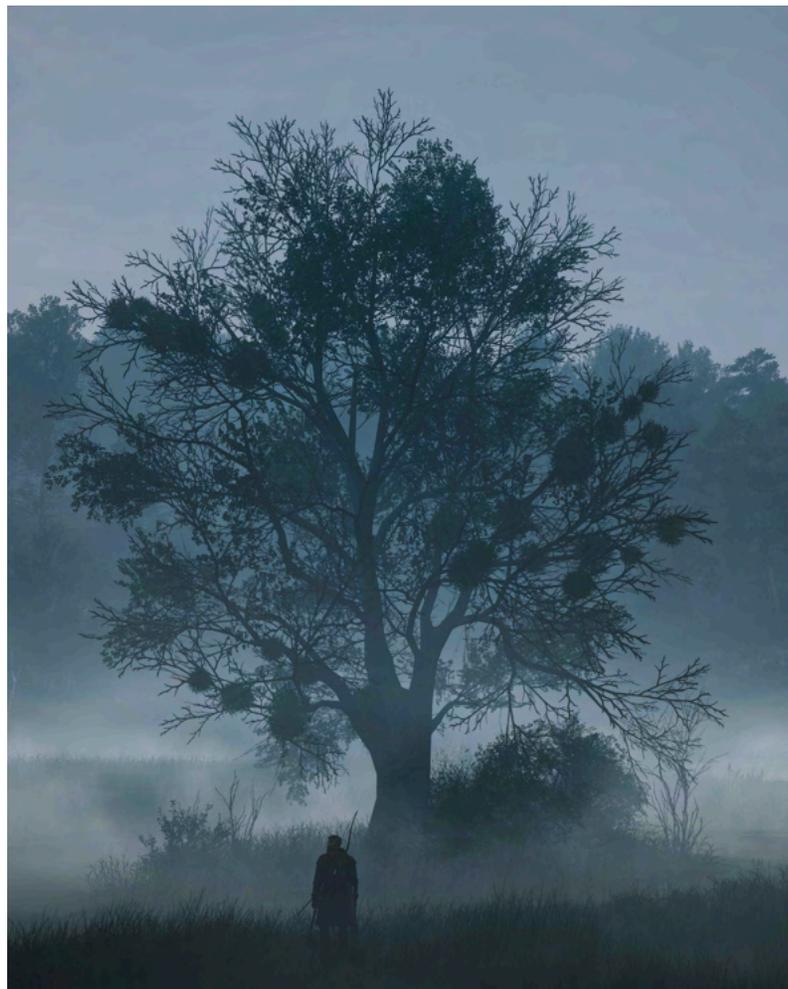
curtisbeadlephotography  
*Cyberpunk 2077*



THEME  
SPOTLIGHT

"I'm often drawn to capturing atmospheric  
and foggy photos that create a sense of  
mystery."

soulsurrender  
*Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*

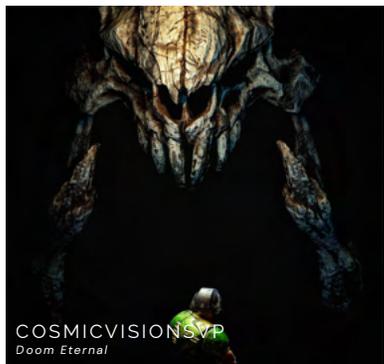




belegarsson  
*Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*



wondernooB  
*Assassin's Creed Odyssey*



COSMICVISIONSVP  
*Doom Eternal*



amich\_vp  
*Alan Wake 2*



\_\_Auron\_\_  
*Silent Hill 2*



v-a-i-n  
*Banishers Ghosts of New Eden*



El\_K\_mazumo  
*Ghost of Yotei*



NeoFulcrum  
*Star Wars Jedi Survivor*



emeritus.vp  
*Elden Ring*



feltiik  
*Starfield*



lushshading  
*Silent Hill f*



Stratoz fearz  
*Senua's Saga: Hellblade II*



NoricaVP  
*Ghost of Yotei*



INDIANA JONES  
COLLECTOR'S EDITION

horace0816  
*Indiana Jones*



deadeyecaptures  
*Ghost of Yotei*



\_xandros\_vp\_  
*The Alters*



technonaut.frames  
*Ghost of Tsushima*

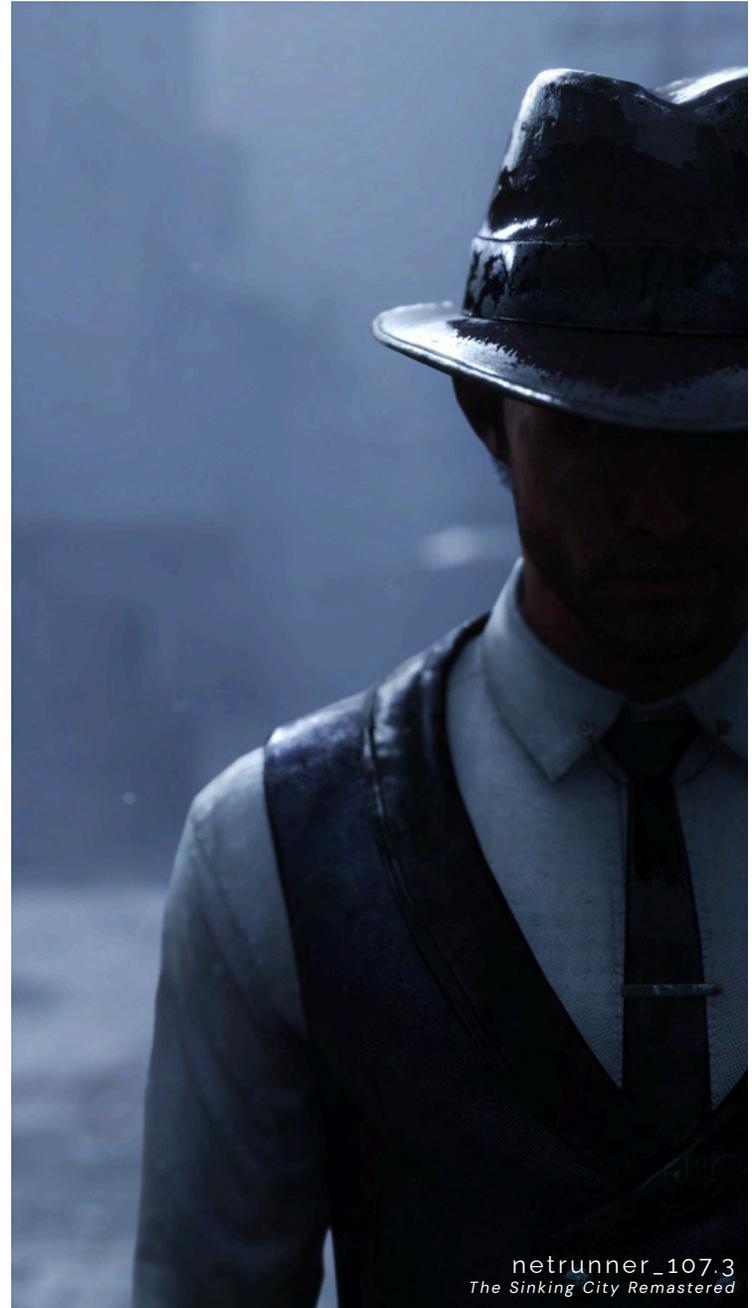


**#TPM  
SecondChance**

*"I submitted the shot for the PMAs and it was an honorable mention.*

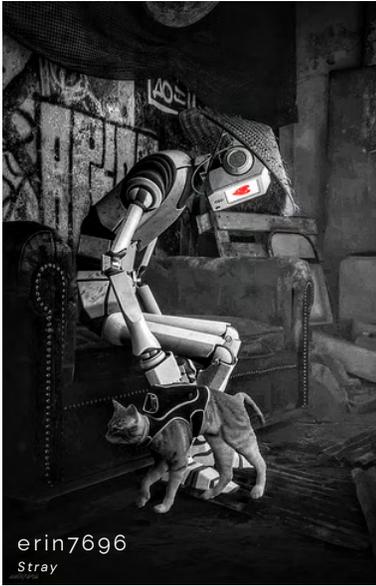
*Could it have won? I don't know, it's hard to say, but I do love it dearly."*

thoraxtheimpaler  
Indika



deadeyecaptures  
Ghost of Yotei

netrunner\_107.3  
The Sinking City Remastered



erin7696  
Stray



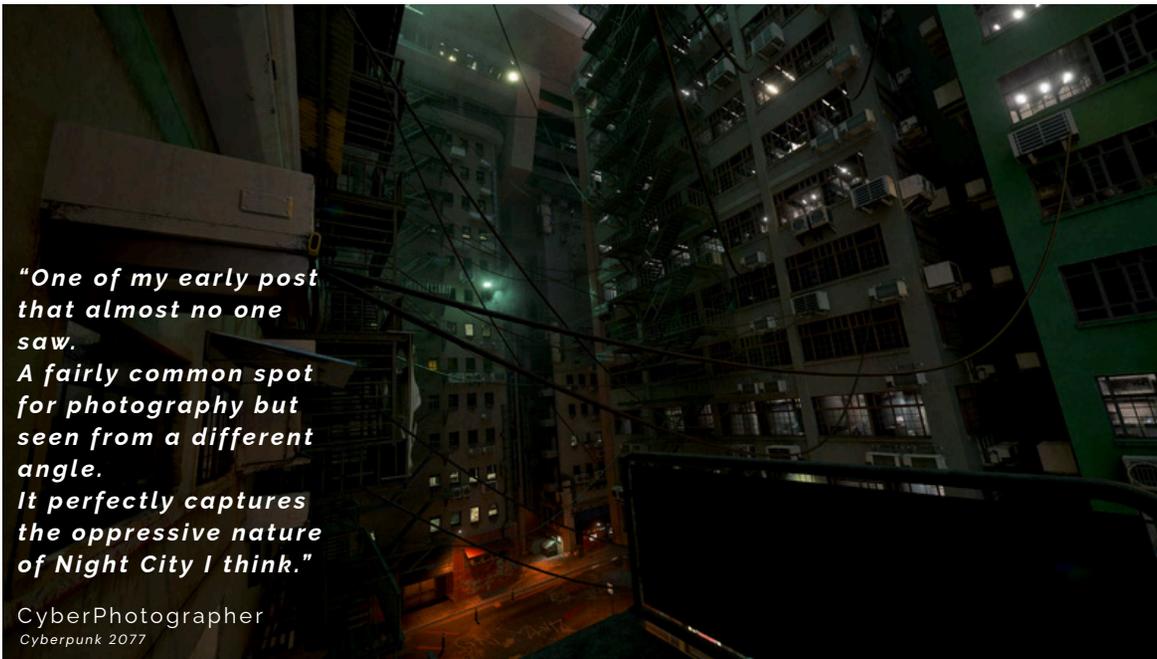
night\_moth.vp  
The Matrix Awakens



droody.mode  
Days Gone Remastered



smokeymonstrvp  
Red Dead Redemption 2

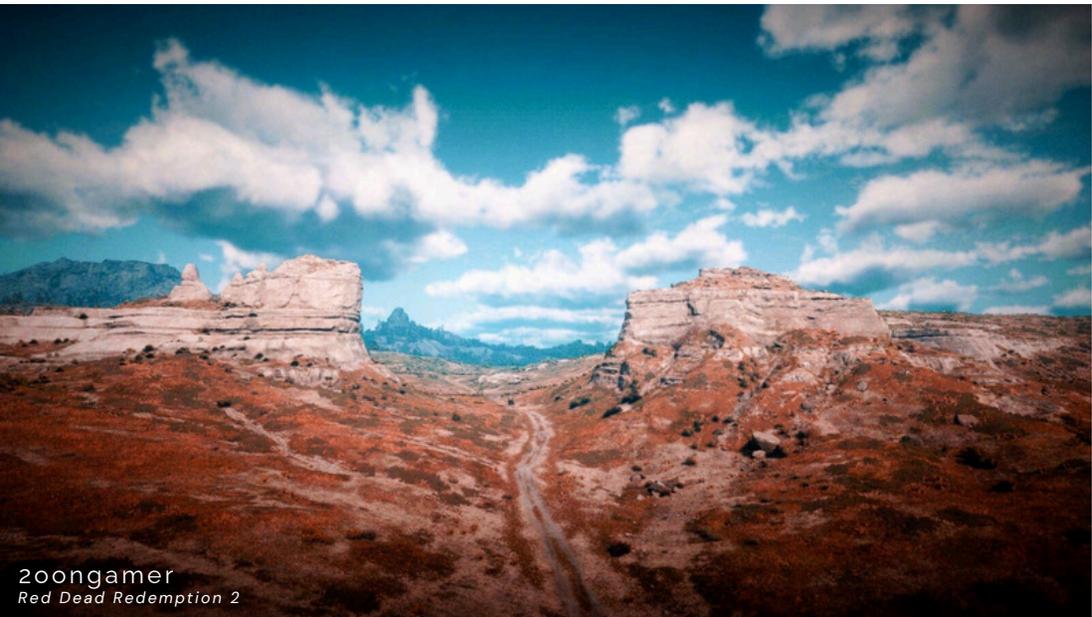


*"One of my early post that almost no one saw. A fairly common spot for photography but seen from a different angle. It perfectly captures the oppressive nature of Night City I think."*

CyberPhotographer  
Cyberpunk 2077



hettair  
Cyberpunk 2077





"This shot holds a special place in my heart because it turned out to be a cool action shot by chance. I'm not that great at this genre so when I take a good action photo, I'm especially proud of it.

I think it has to include movement yet also be clean enough for the viewer to be able to take in what's happening in front of them.

In this capture in particular I was lucky enough to open the photo mode when Clive's cape took up half the frame and looked sick while he himself was about to charge the enemy.

All the visual effects and the dominating blue hues make this shot even more appealing and powerful to me.

And the fact the game has a very simple and quite limiting photo mode makes me even more proud I was able to achieve all that."

wingsforsmiles  
*Final Fantasy XVI*

mroosa  
*Star Wars: Jedi Survivor*



v\_on\_the\_road  
*Cyberpunk 2077*



u.tente01  
*Alan Wake 2*



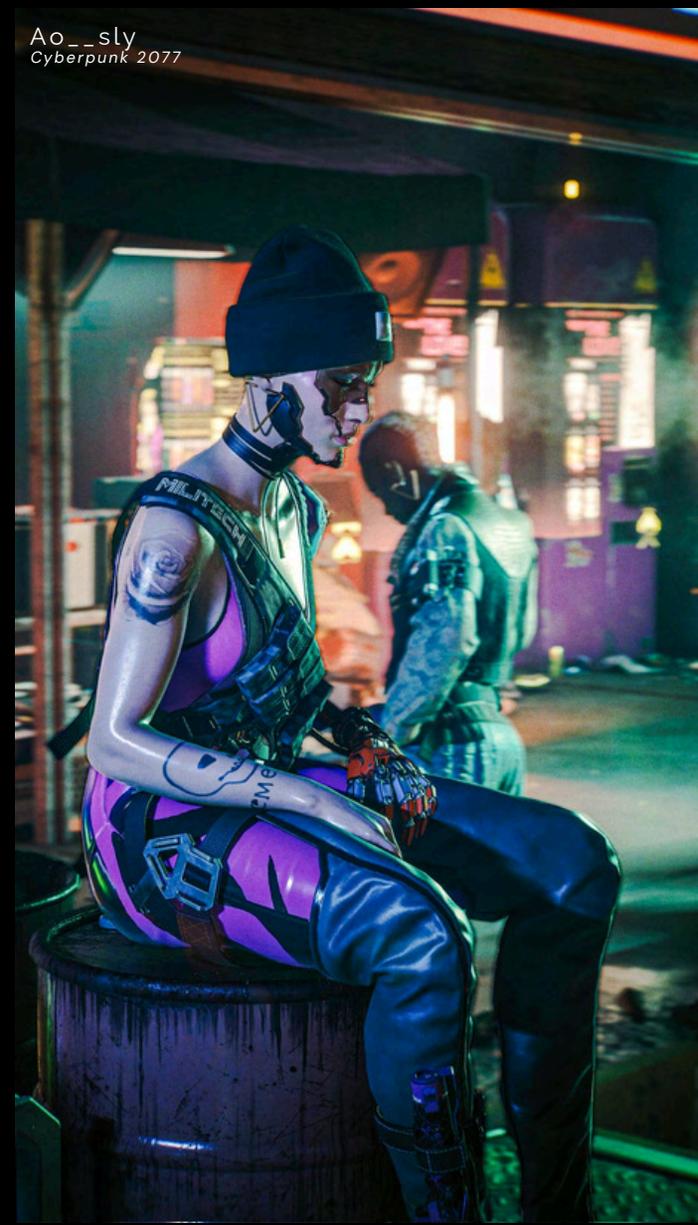
THEME  
SPOTLIGHT

"I would go with that for #TPMSecondChance just because its something very unusual for me a photo like that with 2 photos into 1.

I still like it a lot and I think it can tell a lot of stories, a photo that can make you sad but can also remind you that you are not alone."

GrayFoxVP  
*Cyberpunk 2077*







Q&A WITH

# SHINOBI\_SPACE



shinobispace.com



shinobi\_space



shinobi\_space\_vp

Anyone who is involved in the world of virtual photography will inevitably come across the name **Shinobi**. He has already helped many games achieve a solid photo mode – including **Claire Obscur: Expedition 33**. In this interview, he tells us about himself and how working as a photo mode consultant looks like.



Hi everyone, my name is Shinobi. I'm 45, French, and I moved to Japan in 2011. I hold a Master's degree in Fine Arts, with a specialization in cinema and photography toward the end of my studies. I've been doing Virtual Photography since 2019 and I'm mainly active on X.

A few years ago, I was running VP challenges through hashtags, helping community pages, livestreaming VP extensively on Twitch, and eventually I started a YouTube channel. The production quality is fairly low, but the content is (hopefully) interesting and entirely focused on VP.

I'm also now a freelance photo mode consultant and capture artist, working with publishers and studios when they want my input.

How did you first get into photo mode consulting and what other photo modes have you been involved in?

I kind of fell into it back in 2019, after a few months of activity on X. I started talking with the founders of Cold Symmetry about their first game, Mortal Shell, shortly after they released an open beta and noticed some of my PC shots. I decided to offer them insights on the photo mode they had just started developing.

I ended up being very involved in its creation, and after that experience I tried to repeat the process as often as possible, thinking that bigger games could lead the way with new features and serve as references for future photo modes.

That's how I more or less helped shape what is now known as a "photo mode consultant" role. So far, I've been involved in Mortal Shell, The Shore, DEATHLOOP, Cyberpunk 2077 (Update 2.0), and Clair Obscur: Expedition 33, to the point of being credited in the game. I've also contributed to other games to varying degrees, sometimes leading to actual changes, sometimes not.

## What did the consultant process look like in Clair Obscur: Expedition 33?

To summarize, my role was to provide the team with clear and useful information about what a strong photo mode should look like. That includes breaking down features, proposing new ideas, prioritizing them, validating their concepts, or explaining why something wasn't needed – or how it could be improved.

It also involved a lot of pedagogy: demonstrating why certain features would be real strengths for the game. Then came extensive testing, adjustments, feedback, rinse and repeat. We had team calls after each testable iteration and progressed step by step that way.

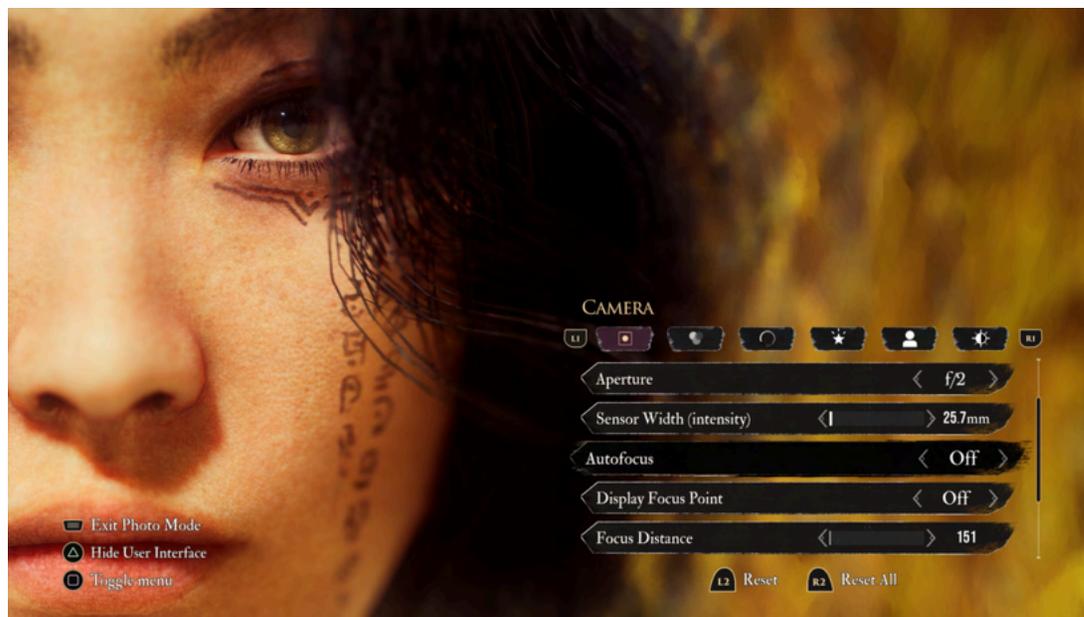
## What were some of the most important features that you pushed for?

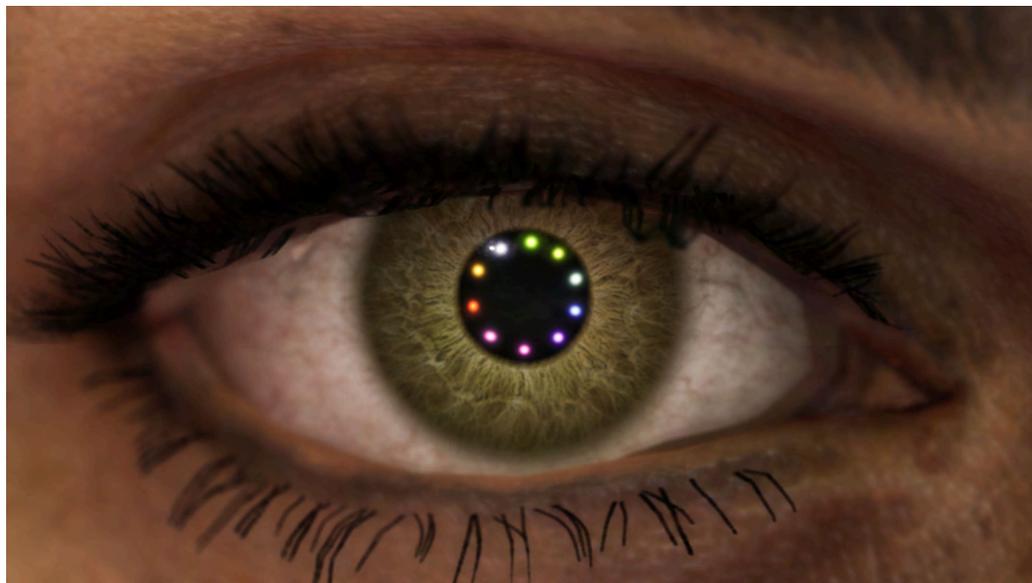
A full photo mode in cutscenes, unlimited camera range, RGB curves control, no-collision mode, a DOF position visualizer, custom lights, as well as grids, proper tab organization, and many other quality-of-life elements.

## Where there any settings you suggested that didn't make the cut?

Obviously, a lot—a lot. My job is to provide as many ideas as possible, but also to understand the studio's constraints and help cut the less relevant or technically impossible ones. I constantly adapt my recommendations to what's realistically achievable.

For example, my initial vision for the "Characters" tab was quite different from what it is now, but hopefully we'll get a chance to upgrade it in the future. Who knows?





Custom lights in a photo mode are great, but where did the magic number of 10 to include come from?

I can't go into full detail, but I can explain why I advocated for as many light sources as possible. Virtual Photography and screenshot capture are very different in nature. VP is strongly driven by artistry and creative intent, whereas capture is more about representing the game and its marketing value.

Most developers working on photo modes are usually more familiar with capture than VP. For them, a custom light system mainly exists to help with character portraits, where three lights are often enough, and orbital movement feels sufficient.

But VPer's need much more creative freedom. We want to light entire scenes, add accents to details like jewelry, create catchlights in the eyes, and so on. That's how I explained the need for "as many lights as possible." Technically, the balance ended up being found at ten.

Was it difficult to convince the developers to add the unlimited camera range?

Not really. The main challenge was making sure it could work properly across all platforms. I told them it didn't have to be truly limitless, just very wide – but they managed to make it work.

There are always discussions around this feature. I had the same conversations on *Mortal Shell*, *DEATHLOOP*, and *Expedition 33*. I guess I can be convincing – and I'm lucky to work with incredible studios.



What do you think about the final version of the photo mode and how do you feel about your involvement?

I think we managed to create a very solid photo mode, suitable for both casual photographers and more advanced users. That was extremely important to me. I didn't want it to be just another copy-paste UE5 blueprint. I wanted the team to push boundaries, take risks, and be bold—just like the game itself.

I would have been genuinely devastated to see yet another forgettable photo mode in a game that had such a strong impact on me.

As for my involvement, I'm obviously very proud and grateful to have worked on such a great project. I believe it will help me reach other games in the future, either directly as a consultant or indirectly, if developers see the Expedition 33 photo mode and think, "We could do this – and maybe even push it further."

Not long ago, custom light systems weren't even a thing. Now they're almost mandatory for a strong photo mode. Hopefully, Expedition 33 will help normalize having more than three lights, no-collision mode, photo mode in cutscenes... and so on.

Lastly - do you have any cool tips of PM settings, locations, effects etc, that you think people should try out?

Not really. As always: experiment. Push every slider back and forth, find your own ideas. Mix lights to create nuances you didn't expect. Explore using the camera range. Play the "photo mode game."

A while ago, I talked about the concept of "unborn shots": images that potentially exist every time someone opens a photo mode, but never come to life because of its limitations. I encourage everyone to go find those shots in Expedition 33, where anything can be born from the hand of the painter... or rather, the photographer.

#TPM  
#COExp33





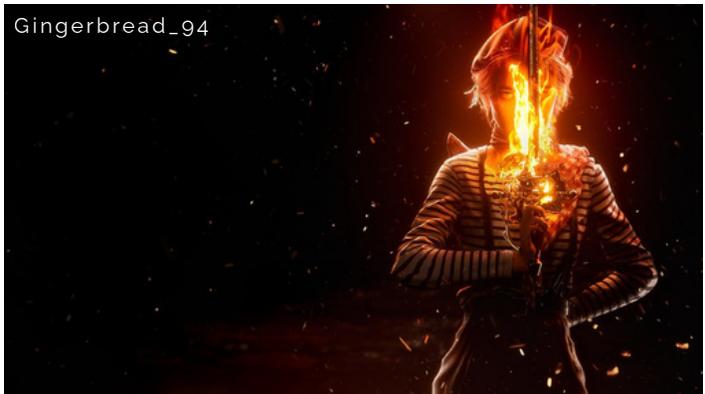
waterpelyn



Raider\_Warrior



FrameCaptured



Gingerbread\_94



Liveevilphotos



9b75



ludos\_vp



muse.ruined



alphasuni



s.picturez



suedemaker



ValkyrieQ8



black\_dahlia.vp



grayfoxvp



black\_dahlia.vp



photomodeoftsu



niinakaniin.vp

*Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*

I'm Nimmu, a virtual photographer based in Finland. I started sharing my Horizon Forbidden West captures on social media in 2023, and from there I slowly began exploring other games and their photo modes.

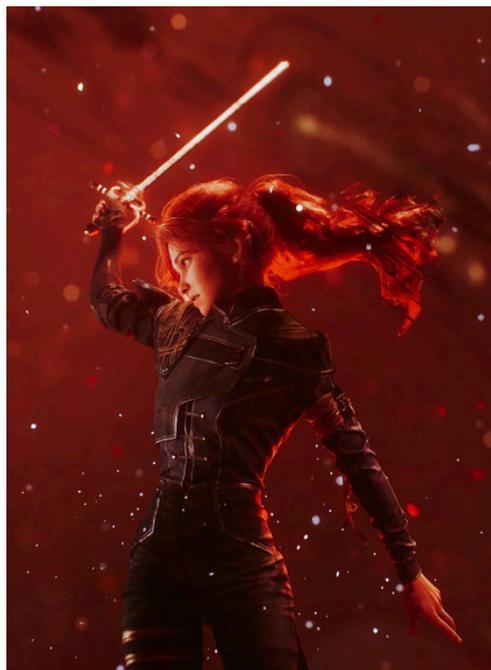
I've always loved photography, but virtual photography gave me the push to pursue it more seriously in real life as well. Studying photography deepened my understanding of light, composition, and the ways of communicating visually - and that knowledge has completely transformed the way I approach VP.

Combining my love for gaming and photography has truly meant everything to me. After years of feeling like a bit of a weirdo in a small town for loving both video games and sunset photos, I guess I can say I've finally found my own little place in the world.

Tell us about your experience of taking photos in the game. What has it been like to use the photo mode and which are your favorite features?"

When I first played Clair Obscur: Expedition 33, my immediate thought was: this game is art. I remember wishing it had a photo mode so I could properly capture everything I was experiencing. So when the photo mode update was announced, I was genuinely excited.

Like with any new photo mode, there's always a short adjustment period, at least for me. It's a bit like learning to ride a bike, in a way - a little wobbly at





start, but you'll get the hang of it once you keep going. You need to understand the controls, the limitations, and the hidden possibilities before it starts to feel natural. But once it clicks, it becomes such a powerful creative tool.

My two favorite features in Expedition 33's photo mode are the free camera and the lighting system. The freedom of the camera opens up endless compositional possibilities - it's essential for building strong, intentional shots.

And the lighting system is incredible. Being able to "paint" with light inside a game is something I absolutely love. As someone who has done portrait photography in real life, experimenting with lighting in photo mode was especially exciting for me: it was actually my first time doing that in any photo mode. Lighting has such a huge impact on mood and storytelling, and once you get comfortable with it, you can really start shaping the emotional atmosphere of your shots. I can't wait to do more experimental captures with the lights in the future.

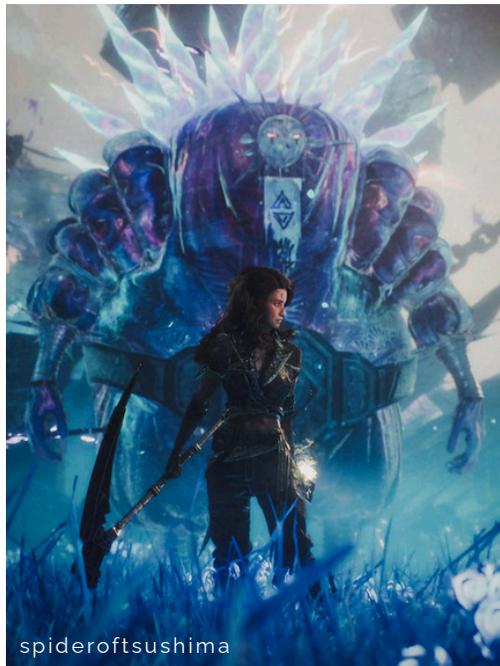
Which photo or set is your personal favourite so far?

One of my personal favorite sets is the black and white of Verso, with a halo over his head - "Light Holder". The dramatic lighting is something I really love doing! And I was so happy I managed to create this as I had envisioned it in my head.

niinakaniin.vp  
*Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*



sleepsector\_VP



spideroftsushima



wa\_ca\_bi



Gingerbread\_94



SimonoaVp



clair.oscuro



wintermut\_e



wearepotatochips



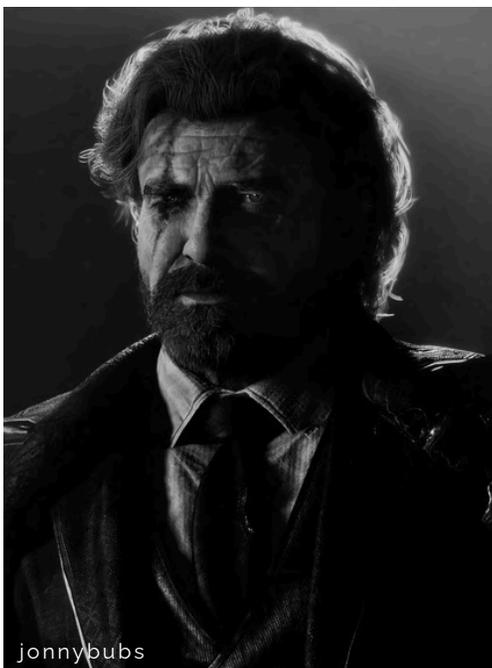
DJKE11ER2488



rimlit\_visions



wingsforsmiles



jonnybubs



CapturesKh



horace0816



# The  
Photomode



fuchsia  
Cyberpunk 2077



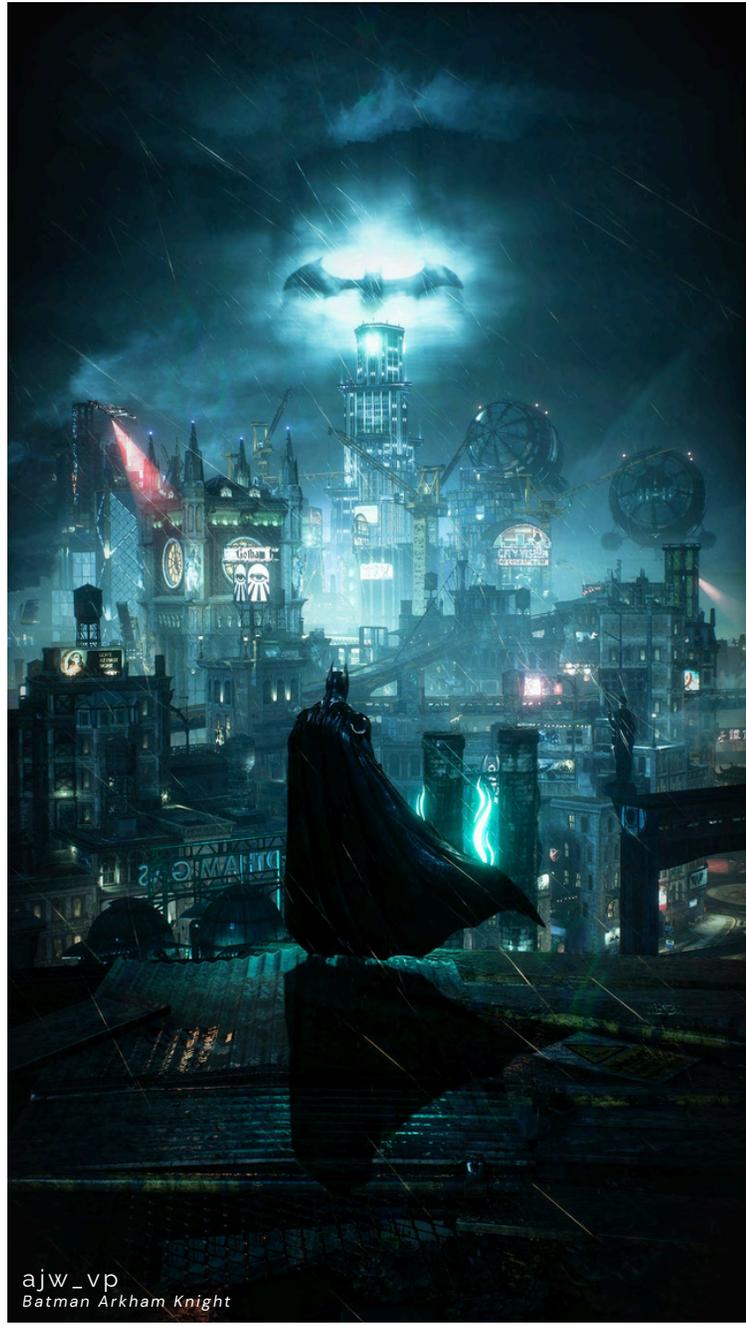
Faerk7  
God of War Ragnarök



eyesofedens  
Control



pmi\_plotnikov  
Mortal Shell



ajw\_vp  
Batman Arkham Knight



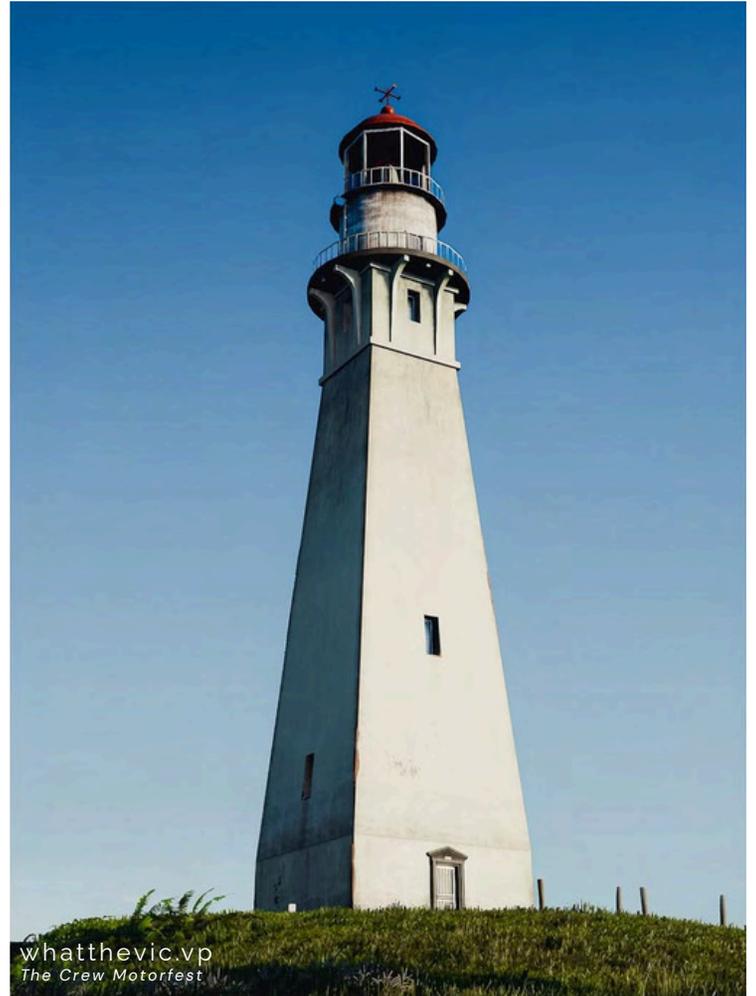
Univ8r8G8C0  
Cairn



Zakon\_BY  
Red Dead Redemption 2



goodlovecapture  
Kingdom Come Deliverance 2



whatthevic.vp  
The Crew Motorfest



Sefwick  
Gran Turismo Sport

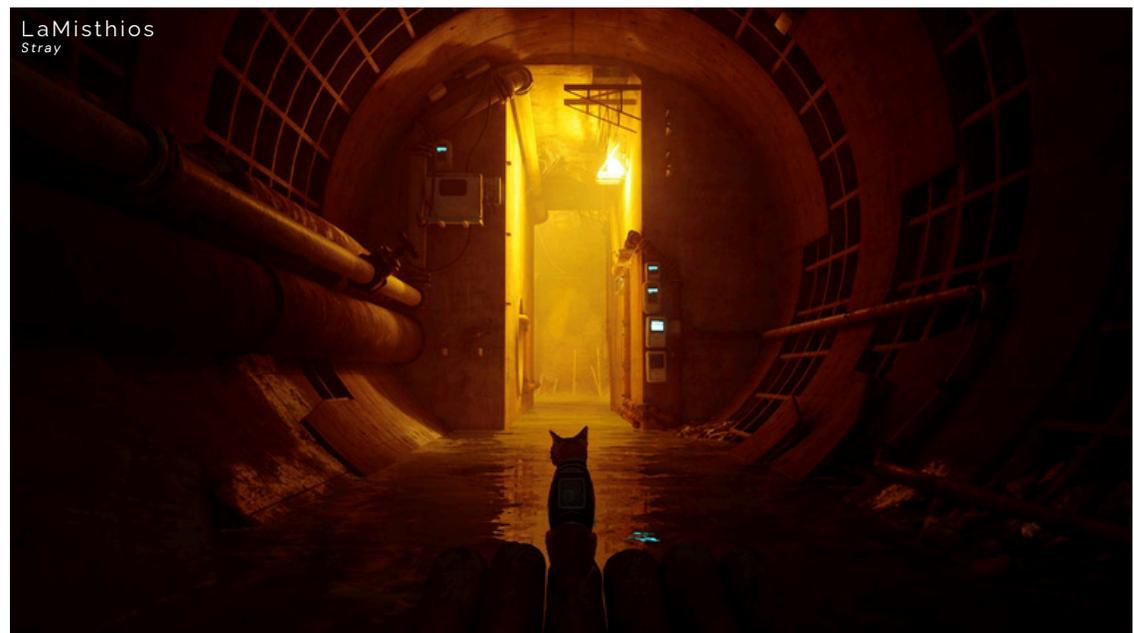
"Hello, I'm Kiroshi Optics VP. I'm from the Philippines and I'm a photographer who absolutely enjoys playing video games. Cyberpunk 2077 happens to be my favorite game of all time!

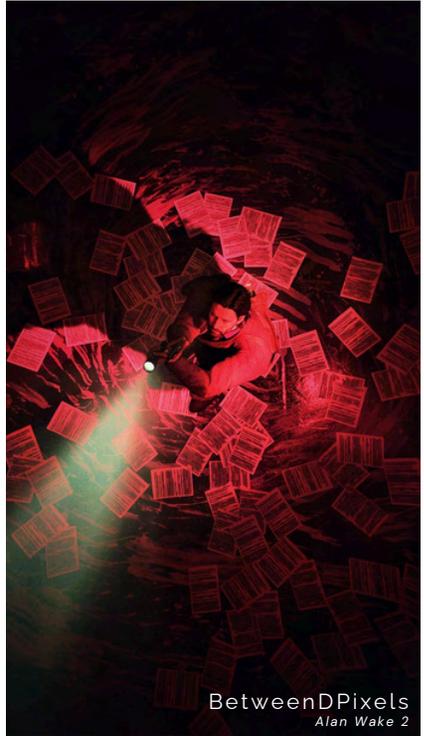
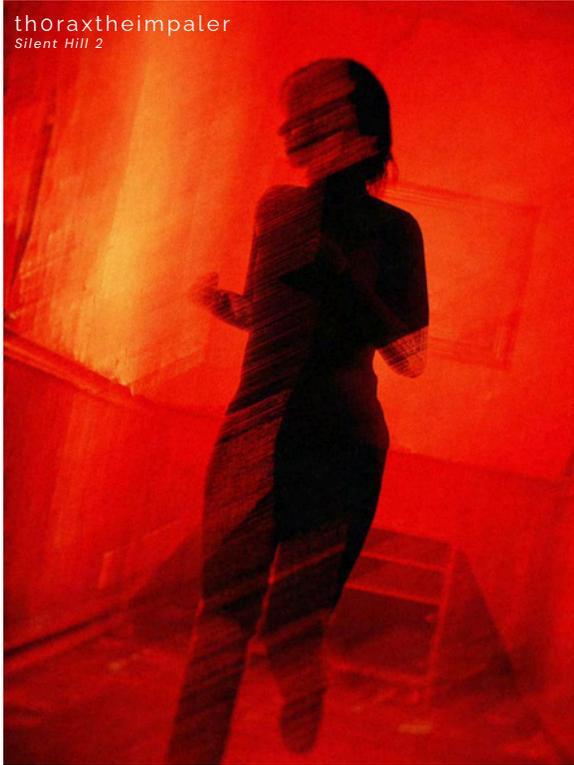
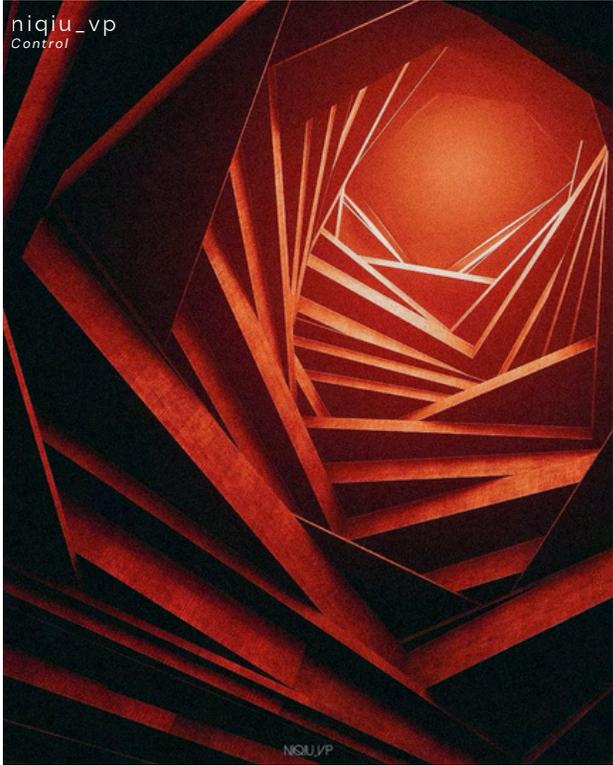
I've been taking screenshots from games for a long time, but I never knew VP was actually a thing until late last year. One of my friends saw the screenshots I took from Cyberpunk 2077 and encouraged me to turn them into a series which led me to creating an Instagram account. I was then curious why so many people following me had "VP" in their names, and that's when I discovered Virtual Photography. I fell in love instantly. It has become one of my creative outlets, and I truly love the VP community.

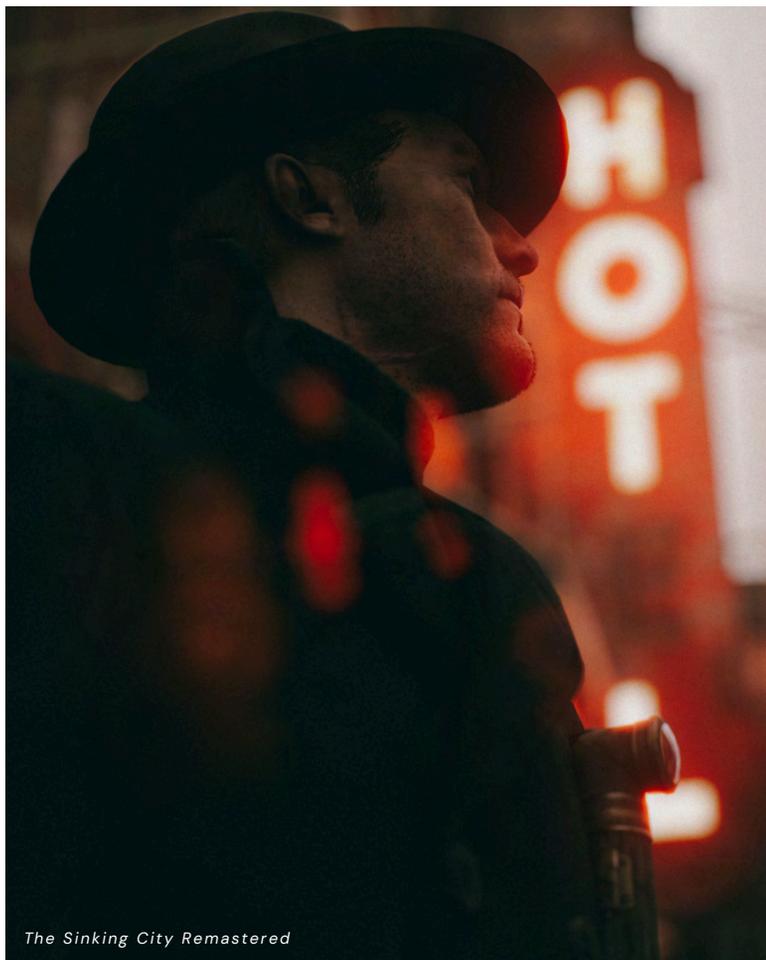
These photos were heavily inspired by the song "So Easy (To Fall In Love)" by Olivia Dean. The song is beautiful and gave me a sense of ease and freedom, which made me want to use it as inspiration for a photo set. From the song title, I asked myself: Who is easy to fall in love with? All I knew was that Alt Cunningham has one of, if not the most, beautiful faces in Cyberpunk 2077. I connected all of those ideas and boom! We have a carefree Alt."

kiroshi.optics  
*Cyberpunk 2077*









*The Sinking City Remastered*



*Dragon Age: The Veilguard*



*Star Wars Jedi: Survivor*

"My adventure with VP began with Fallout 4 and Skyrim. That's when I started experimenting with ENB and a ton of mods. For years, those were the only games I screenshotted.

The next major game was Dragon Age Inquisition - it was here that I started learning ReShade and camera mods. After that experience, I started exploring VP more and more in other titles.

My last major game was Cyberpunk 2077. It was this game that finally got me interested in social media and VP communities. Throughout all this time, I've been constantly experimenting and trying different styles and themes. I guess I can't say I have a favorite that I feel comfortable and confident in. I'm still learning and developing.

What inspired me to take these photos? I think it was mainly Cyberpunk 2077, but I've

always been fascinated by photos and screenshots of large cities filled with neon, especially dystopian, futuristic cities. On the one hand, we have a dark, depressing world and environment, and on the other, an abundance of light and colour, which creates a more positive and vibrant atmosphere.

I like this contrasting combination. Plus, the neon light is just cool."

ma-moonshadow



waterpelyn  
*Horizon Forbidden West*



VALuang2  
*The Crew Motorfest*



reddeadgem  
*Ghost of Yōtei*



gophingame  
*Skate.*



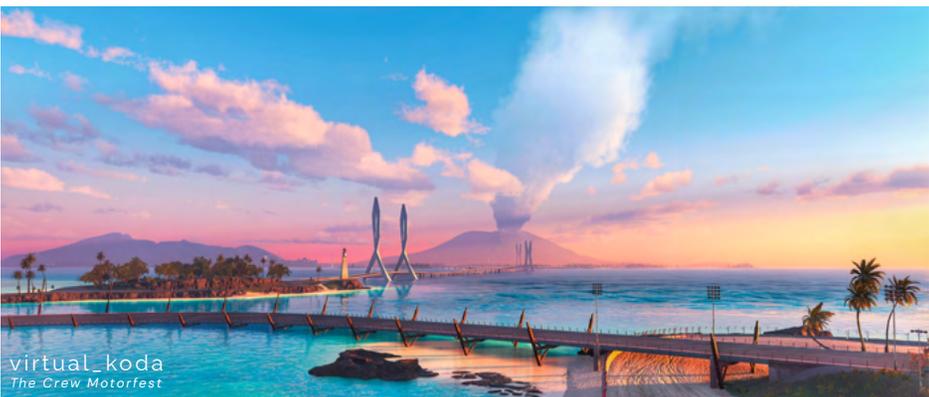
\_GenieCrazy\_  
Lords of The Fallen



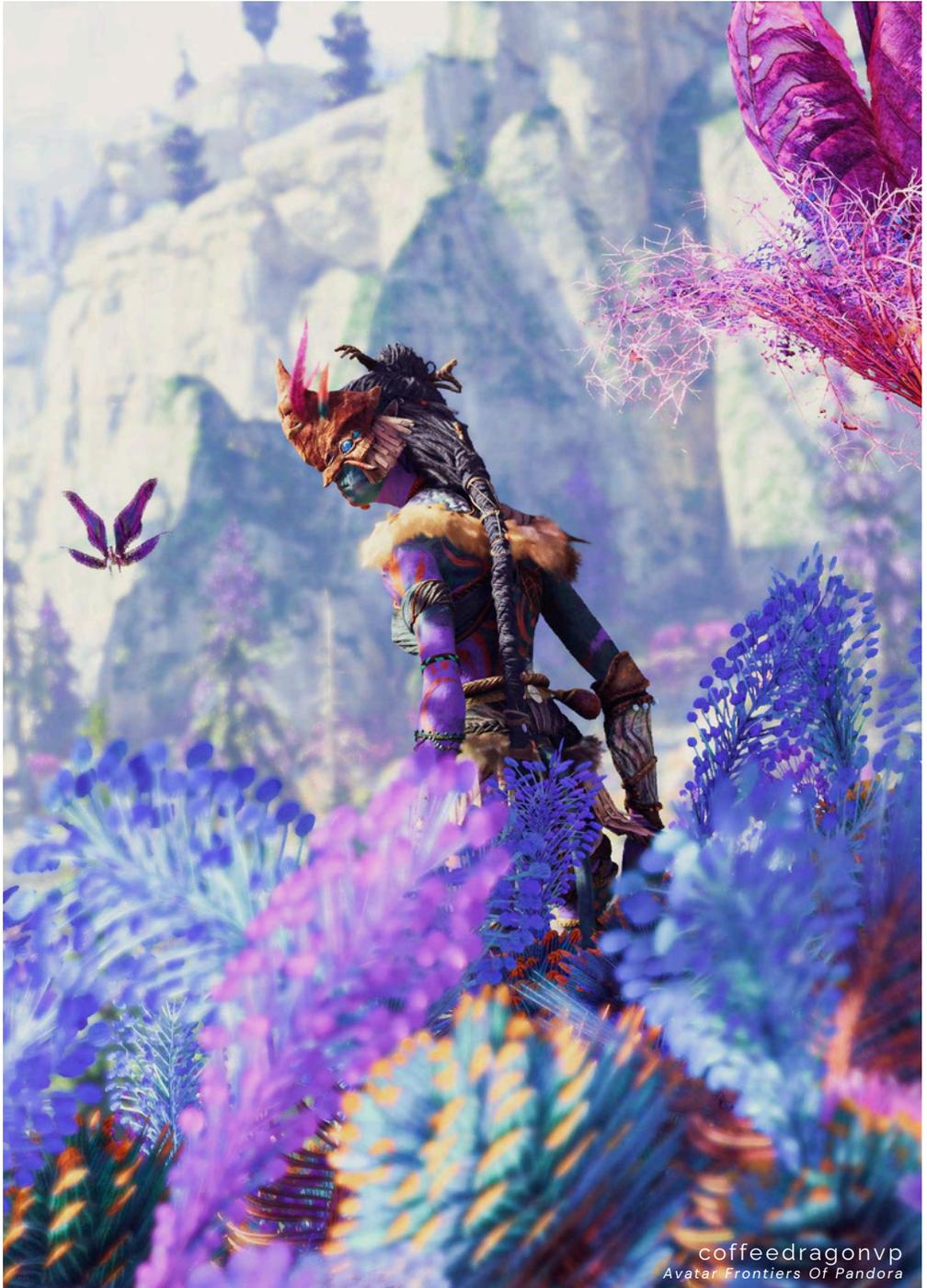
HexiaRose  
Ghost of Yōtei



jchouk  
Ghost of Yōtei



virtual\_koda  
The Crew Motorfest



coffeedragonvp  
Avatar Frontiers Of Pandora

"Hi all, Norica here!

I've been doing VP for over two years now, which is pretty unbelievable. I've been taking VP shots for much longer than that, but I only started posting them in November 2023, and it has been such an incredible part of my life ever since. It's given me a creative outlet to bring my ideas to life and allowed me to get to know so many talented and inspiring people in the VP world.

Now, back to this set! I've been trying to recreate something that feels different from what I usually do. Ghost of Yotei is such a beautiful game and is probably one of the most cinematic games you could possibly play. In this shot, I challenged myself a bit by using an ultrawide 32:9 aspect ratio.

The new format gave me a very tight space, so the image had to be well composed and structured, and the scenery had to be carefully chosen, as adding too much could create a cluttered feel.

With that said, it helped me bring out a very cinematic feel in these images. From there, I started matching the shots together to create a sense of story, using complementary shapes and colors, and that's the final result.

This set was very much inspired by a lot of the work I've seen you guys put out. It could have never been done without you."

norica\_captures  
*Ghost of Yotei*





spideytwohoses  
*Ghost of Yōtei*



reseticide  
*The Last of Us Part 2*



mirko\_vp  
*Red Dead Redemption 2*



valvisuals\_ph  
*Cyberpunk 2077*



matsuman\_vp  
*Ghost of Yōtei*



screenche  
*Kingdom Come Deliverance 2*



inner\_pause  
*Ghost of Yōtei*



frosent  
*The Last of Us Part 1*



hazelgreen\_vp  
*Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora*



oldwest\_vp  
*Forza Horizon 5*



cll3ar\_rav3n  
*Dragon Age: The Veilguard*



wrnk.zk  
*Spider Man 2*



m\_nt\_13  
*Assassin's Creed Valhalla*



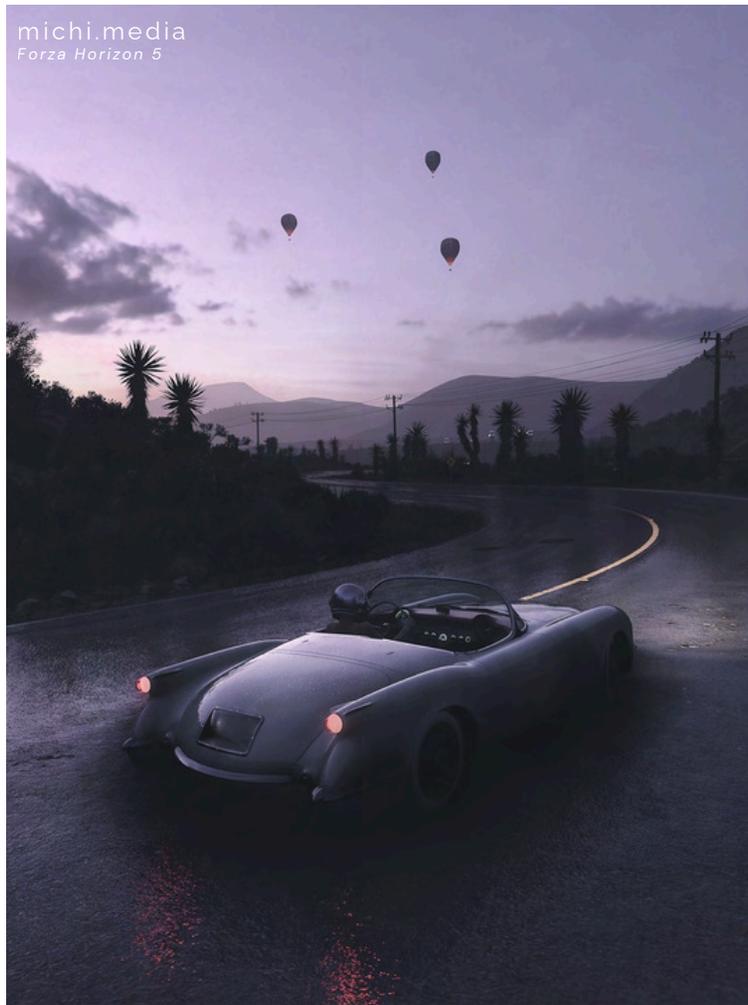
amich\_vp  
*Ghost of Yōtei*



night\_moth\_vp  
*The Matrix Awakens*



primnose  
*Dragon Age: The Veilguard*



michi.media  
*Forza Horizon 5*



Foxpurple  
*Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora*

