COVER BY TAMMY.QUARRY_VP

THE PHOTOMODE

E-MAGAZINE #35

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 their work and it will take you directly to their profile.
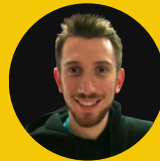
Want to be featured?

Tag and mention us or use #ThePhotoMode
& participate in our monthly themes.
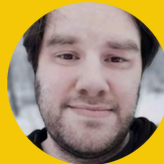
contact@thephotomode.com

Meet the Team

Aaron/@falconswift87 -
contributing author

Nick/@suzuhablack -
engagement

Dave/@Dpruttz_vp -
engagement

Malin/@playpausephoto -
editor in chief

Turið/@turidtorkil -
editor & engagement

Mik/@thefourthfocus -
contributing author

Bianca/@Uvioletra -
interviewer & engagement

Contents

THE PHOTOMODE
E-MAGAZINE #35

RESOURCE LIST

THEFOURTHFOCUS
IN-DEPTH PHOTO MODE REVIEWS AND GUIDES
BLOG | YOUTUBE

THE VP AWARDS
ANNUAL AWARDS IN THE MODERN ART OF VP
WEBSITE

CAPTURED COLLECTIVE
VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY
INSTAGRAM | BLUESKY
TWITTER/X | WEBSITE

VGP NETWORK
VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY PAGE
TWITTER/X

TOWCB
ASSASSIN'S CREED DEDICATED COMMUNITY
TWITTER/X | WEBSITE
INSTAGRAM | BLUESKY

THE PHOTOMODE
VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMINUTY/MAGAZINE
TWITTER/X | WEBSITE
INSTAGRAM | BLUESKY

VPCONTEXT
VP COMMUNITY, 3D EXHIBITIONS AND MAGAZINE
WEBSITE | TWITTER/X

SOCIETY OF VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHERS
COMMUNITY GALLERY
INSTAGRAM

VP MINIMALISM
VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY MINIMALISM TIPS AND TRICKS
INSTAGRAM | TWITTER/X

R/VIRTUALPHOTOGRAPHERS
VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY
SUBREDDIT

VP INSPIRED
VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY PAGE
BLUESKY

PHOTOMODE AWARDS
PHOTOMODE AWARD SHOW
TWITTER/X | WEBSITE
INSTAGRAM | BLUESKY

SEE THE FULL RESOURCE LIST ON OUR WEBSITE

THE
VIRTUAL
PHOTOGRAPHY
AWARDS // 2025

△THE
FOUR
THFO
by CUS□

THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS // 2025

The Virtual Photography Awards are the original and most prestigious celebration of in-game photography and screenshot art. Each year, these awards honour the creativity of digital artists worldwide; showcasing their talent and inspiring new visions across the community.

Entries are invited entries over 7 diverse categories and culminate in the ultimate prize of Virtual Photographer of the Year.

Website: thefourthfocus.com/thevpawards

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

The most outstanding images captured using in-game photography tools will be chosen by an expert Judging Panel made up of experienced photographers and industry professionals.

Entries open Dec 14 – 31st 23:59 GMT

>>ENTER HERE<<

>>SUBMISSION GALLERIES<<

THE VP AWARDS CATEGORIES

The VP Awards span over 7 diverse thematic categories, each designed to challenge the imagination and to inspire innovation.

ACTION CATEGORY

Capture the intensity of movement, combat, sports, and racing with dynamic compositions that freeze motion and impactful moments in a single static frame.

COLLECTION CATEGORY

More than just a single image, this category seeks cohesive bodies of work that show a common artistic concept, sequence, or visual language across 3 or more images.

ENVIRONMENT CATEGORY

Broad interpretations of the varied and wonderful worlds of video games. Turn to your surroundings to capture the interest that can be found landscapes, nature, urban areas, and fantasy locations.

LO-FI CATEGORY

Embrace photographic imperfections and experimentation for a raw, mood-driven aesthetic. Images here should have an evocative and less technically precise style.

OPEN CATEGORY

For images that fall outside the scope of all other categories, this one allows freedom to create striking and original shots of any photographic style and genre.

PEOPLE CATEGORY

Shots that focus on characters – whether individuals or groups – in a personal context to create a connection to the viewer through expressions of identity, emotion, and culture.

STORYTELLING CATEGORY

Use visual language to create shots that go beyond aesthetics to convey meaning. This category rewards images that evoke a narrative, raise questions, or invite the viewer to step into the scene.

THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS // 2025
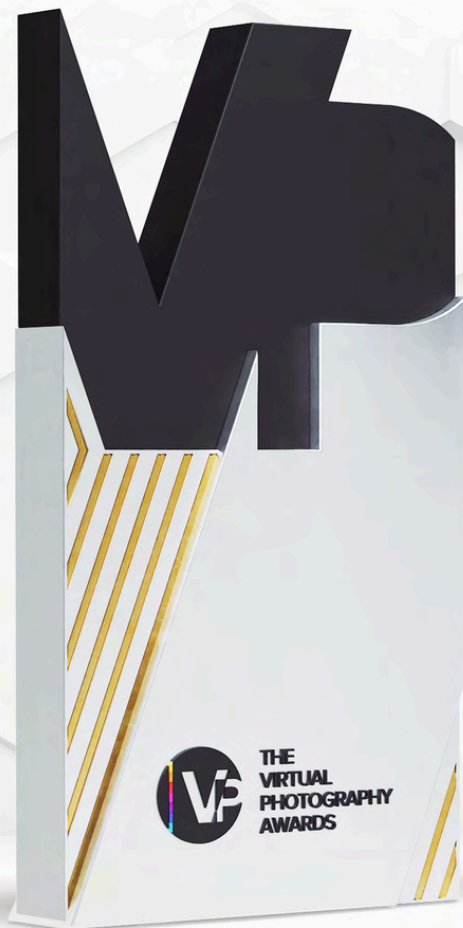
OVERALL WINNER:

- DOOM: THE DARK AGES COLLECTOR'S BUNDLE
- DOOM: THE DARK AGES LIMITED EDITION XBOX WIRELESS CONTROLLER
- FRAME-A-GAME BESPOKE FRAME
- VOID CREW FOR YOU & 3 FRIENDS*

+ Category Winner prizes

CATEGORY WINNERS:

- £100 / $100 PS STORE OR XBOX GIFT CARD
- 12-MONTH FUTURE MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION
  (Digital Camera, EDGE, or ImagineFX)
- ALAN WAKE 2 DELUXE EDITION**
- ASSASSIN'S CREED MIRAGE†
- ATOMIC HEART ARTBOOK
- FORMULA LEGENDS*
- LUSHFOIL PHOTOGRAPHY SIM*
- PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE LOST CROWN†
- STAR WARS OUTLAWS†
- THE ROGUE PRINCE OF PERSIA*

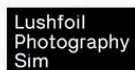*+ Category Runners-Up prizes*

CATEGORY RUNNERS-UP:

- ATOMIC HEART + ATOMIC PASS*
- ATOMFALL DELUXE EDITION*§
- CRITICAL HIT PR GAME CODE*
- PIRATE PR GAME CODE*§

* Digital key (Steam), † Digital key (Epic), ‡ Digital key (Ubisoft Connect), § Digital key (PS5, Xbox X|S)

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 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.

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

ASSASSIN'S CREED SHADOWS SPECIAL

From March to April 2025 TOWCB were running a Virtual Photography contest in collaboration with @Assassins_UK, the official account for the United Kingdom, to celebrate the release of Assassin's Creed Shadows.

The winners are featured in this issue.

THEONESWHOCAMEBEFORE   ACFIRSTCIV

Samurai

AlexKOnstantin

AC UK Team:

We chose this amazing virtual photo as our favourite due to its many layers of beauty. Having the fierce silhouette of Yasuke set in front of the iconic rising sun of Japan encapsulates the spirit of Assassin's Creed Shadows.

Aaron:

Silhouettes and red backgrounds are synonymous with Japanese media. They are symbolic of Japanese culture especially this time period. Even the marketing for Assassin's Creed Shadows is heavily influenced by this style.

In addition, the photo mode has a red dragon filter so we can produce similar style shots. Here we have a phenomenal portrait of Yasuke looking foreboding with his katana by his side.

The use of red and black here is perfection, allowing Yasuke's samurai armour to shine with its intricate design. The composition with the sun behind him and the rocky ground elevating Yasuke to a position of authority, takes this capture to new levels.

Shadow of Japan
PurplePampano

The shinobi was always going to be the sensible approach to weaving the story of Assassin's Creed through Japan. These infiltrators have operated in very similar ways although there is little historical evidence that suggest they actually assassinated targets.

In this capture the drama has really been elevated thanks to some excellent composition work. The lighting is delicious, with Naoe's hair flowing in the wind. I really like how there is a minimal approach to the photo. She really looks menacing perched on the structure, ready to pounce on an unexpected foe.

I am getting Spider-Man 3 movie poster vibes. I think Purple Pampano has aced the Assassin's Creed mood with this frightful good portrait.

The masks that you find in Assassin's Creed Shadows are impressive and fit effortlessly with the themes of the game. Allowing Naoe and Yasuke to adopt similar styles to the people they are hunting ties the two parties together in a shaded battle that blurs the lines of right and wrong.

I think this is a fantastic portrait that gives an almost two face vibe. It's such a great idea to have such an intimidating mask show the softness of Naoe through her eye. The shadows have been applied excellently and the colours softly, which assists in highlighting the superb details of the mask. I would not want to see this face hunting me in the night.

Many Faces
RalstonVP

I have longed to go back to the streets and rooftops of big cities in Assassin's Creed for quite some time now. The RPG entries offer us glimpses of this but are more focused on the full world.

That being said there are some genuinely impressive buildings to scale in Assassin's Creed Shadows. With any structure the opportunity arises to pose menacingly, looking down on the people you protect.

Bran fortunately has provided that hero moment here with Naoe doing her best Batman impression. It was so smart to go with the black and white approach, especially with those thick white clouds offering great contrast to the shot. Without a bird companion this time, full credit must be given for capturing the eagle flying by in the distance. This is an Assassin's Creed photo.

Perched
BranCakesVP

A World in Flames
Ayghan

I have been very impressed with the tone of Assassin's Creed Shadows, especially after the slightly light-hearted approach to Odyssey. So far, we have seen quite a few moody captures, featuring the brutality of feudal Japan.

This one from Ayghan is both majestic and tragic. I am really impressed with the colours, the orange/yellow burning Pagoda stands out magnificently against the dark blue sky. Those embers flickering off in the wind make you feel the sheer power of the blaze, and the composition allows us to realise the scale of this building. The framing of the Pagoda between the trees is a nice touch and Naoe is so brilliantly placed, looking up at the destruction of her homeland.

Once again Ubisoft have provided us with a living and breathing natural world that can sometimes make you feel like you're walking into a David Attenborough documentary. It's the small details such as these stags rutting that help with immersion, something that has evolved since Origins.

Adam has definitely caught a great moment here, such perfect timing. The angle of the shot is excellent allowing us to see the moment of impact, and the level of detail captured in the grass and the stags is beautiful. I also like how the light is beaming in through the gap in the tress, acting as a spotlight on the big fight.

Assassin's Creed Shadows features many duels between skilled fighters, I just didn't expect it to be talking about the wildlife.

Natures Duellists
LegacyofAdam

Being able to blend in with the crowd has been a staple of the series since its inception. Assassins are trained to merge with their environments, disappearing from sight, allowing them to both assassinate and escape unseen.

Finding moments such as the one in this photo are so satisfying. Taka has a knack for eye catching virtual photography and that is evident again here. How can you not admire the focus on Naoe with her unexpectedly colourful attire seamlessly fitting in with the crowd.

I am a big fan of the hat covering the eyes and the framing with the crowd and the blossom trees is immense. It's incredible how everything just works here and is coordinated into such a beautiful shot.

Hide in Plain Sight
TakaSanGames

Assassin's Creed has always allowed us to witness stand out, reflective moments either through cutscenes or more recently photo mode.

I love the layers to this capture with the sun being the focal point, and Naoe beautifully suspended just below. The colour tones are warm and inviting with the different shades of oranges complimenting the darken silhouettes. Naoe starts this journey of vengeance alone but along the way finds friendship to aide her cause. Their struggle to free Japan of its oppressors is long and hard but they do not give up.

I feel this capture epitomise this and would definitely have looked good as an end game cutscene.

Perfectly Poised
s u m m e r s 4 5 8

Something that Ubisoft has always excelled in is the ability to create bountiful environments. From the announcement of Assassin's Creed Shadows, I knew we would be in for some really breath-taking strolls through deep luscious forests. So, what better way to showcase this than an exquisite capture by GoodLove.

I have to say the fog in this photo is amazing and shrouds the image in mystery. The height and depth on show complement the feeling of how small a human is when exploring nature. I adore the silhouette of Naoe, especially with the hair blowing in the wind. It almost feels like there is an impending doom about to appear from that fog.

Through the Trees
g o o d l o v e c a p t u r e

Time for Reflection
d o m o _ v p

Assassin's Creed Shadows is a story of vengeance, which obviously brings a lot of pain and suffering. So, it is nice that Ubisoft allowed the reflective nature of Japanese culture to thrive in the quieter moments of the story.

Just as we can see here with this peaceful shot of Naoe that has been elegantly framed. This is truly exceptional work by Dominik as he shows the softer side of our beloved Naoe.

Capturing her with head down and eyes closed fits the scene brilliantly. I really like the depth of field and how it adds that flame effect to the circle. Naoe really needs these moments, and it helps us to understand her a little more.

#TPM
#NegativeSpace

virtual_coda
The Crew Motorfest

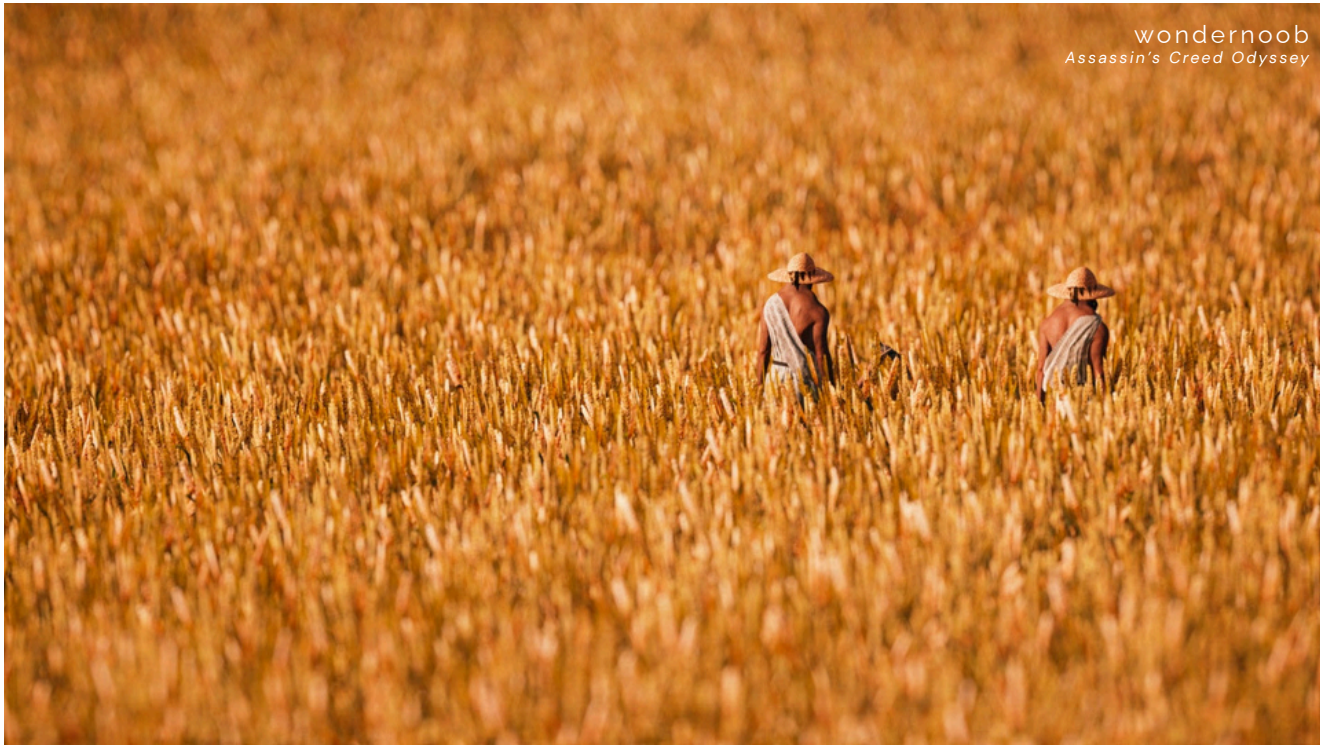alpha_sunii
Spider-Man 2

*"Looking out into the
silent, endless dark,
I am a small observer in a
world of giants."*

theonlyjess_vp
Cyberpunk 2077

wondernoob
Assassin's Creed Odyssey

podtogo
Assassin's Creed Mirage

v-a-i-n
Othercide

amich.vp
Cyberpunk 2077

"For this shot I was replaying the devil ending to focus on the Arasaka siblings, focusing on clean minimalist composition to match the corpo image.
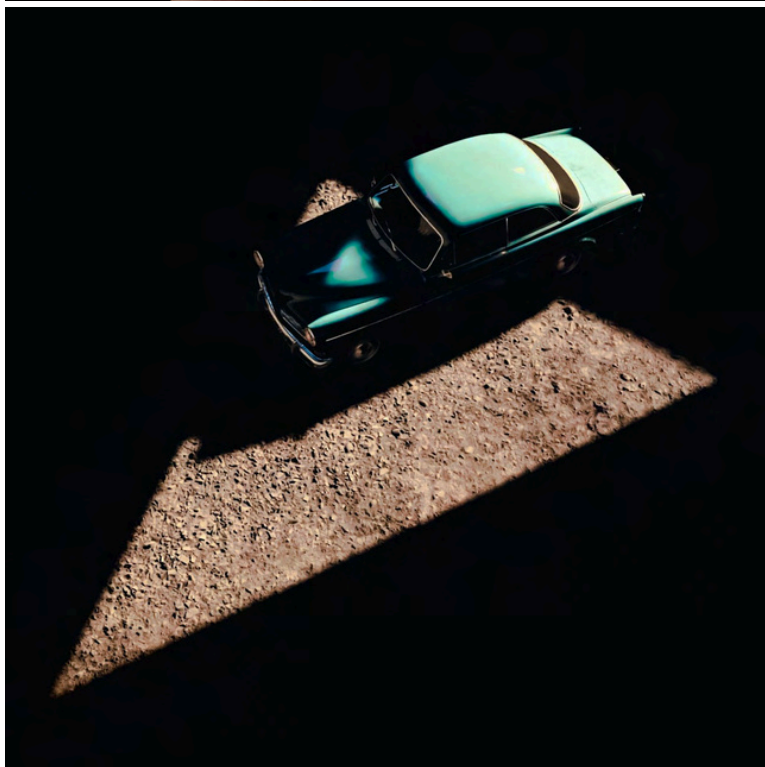
The scene for this shot is darker than I imagined so I selected the ground around Yorinobu and heavily increased the exposure and removed any distractions to help emphasize the dramatic outfit and scale of the scene."

lukey.vp
Alan Wake 2

cyrielle.vp
*Kingdom Come
Deliverance 2*

Uyscuti10
Speed Unbound

astroghost001
Spider-Man 2

*"If our lives are already written,
it would take a courageous man
to change the script."*

From Alan Wake 2

erin7696
Ghost of Yotei

"Ghost of Yotei has been one of my favorite games to photograph recently. It has such beautiful, diverse landscape and weather, along with an amazing photo mode! To get this particular photo, I just framed it how I wanted it, turned up the contrast and messed with the weather/time of day settings until I got a pure white background. Then I chose the filter that blocks all colors except red. The only things I did in post were add a little saturation to make the red pop more and crisp up the details a little bit. Some shots take a lot of time and effort to carve out. You know a shot is there, you can feel it but finding the right angle or lighting can be very difficult. Sometimes shots are just easy from the gate and are just waiting there for you to capture... This was one of those shots.

I got into VP right around the same time I got back into gaming, before I knew what VP was. I was just documenting memories from my favorite games by screenshotting and editing before we had photo mode options. It wasn't until many years later that it really caught on as an art form and I'm so glad that it did! I used to enjoy real life amateur photography, but due to a spinal injury and chronic illness, I really couldn't get out and enjoy what I used to. VP allowed me to adventure through all kinds of amazing worlds and photograph everything along the way. It has been an absolute pleasure witnessing gaming technology get better and better over the years and more games come out with photo modes! I absolutely can't wait to see what's next for both the gaming industry and VP. I'm thrilled to be a part of this talented and thriving community and I'm often convinced to try a new game purely by seeing the VP coming from other players."

GamingQ_VP
Assassin's Creed Shadows
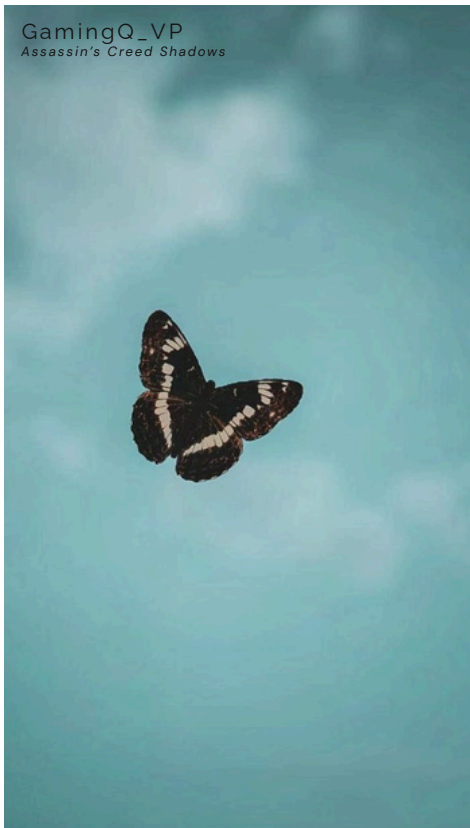
ml3nium
Ghost of Tsushima

edwardframes
Cyberpunk 2077
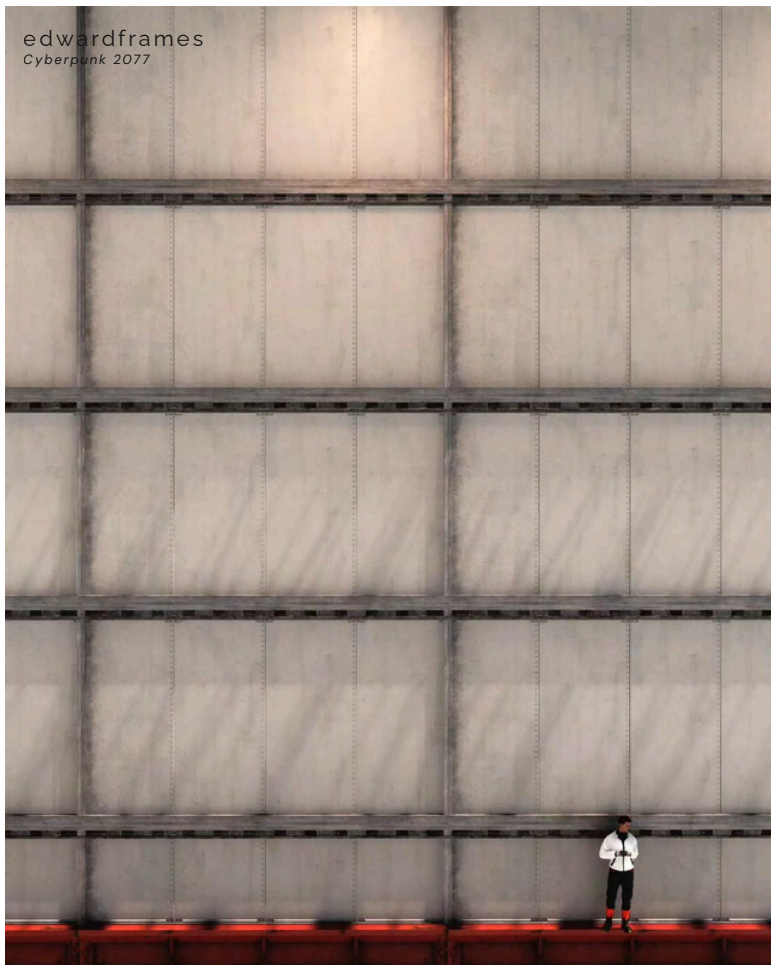
SpideyTwoShoes
Ghost of Tsushima

yurika.visuals
Genshin Impact
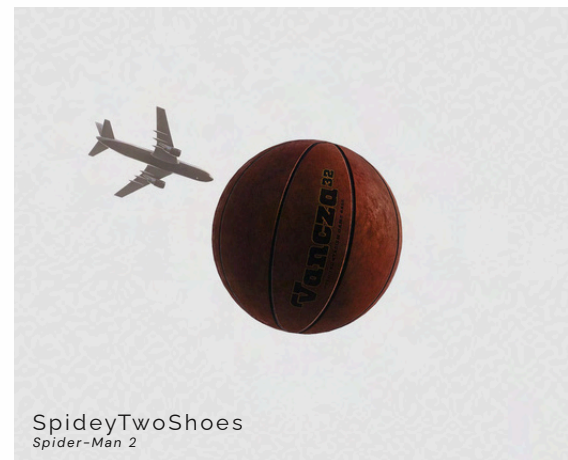
SpideyTwoShoes
Spider-Man 2
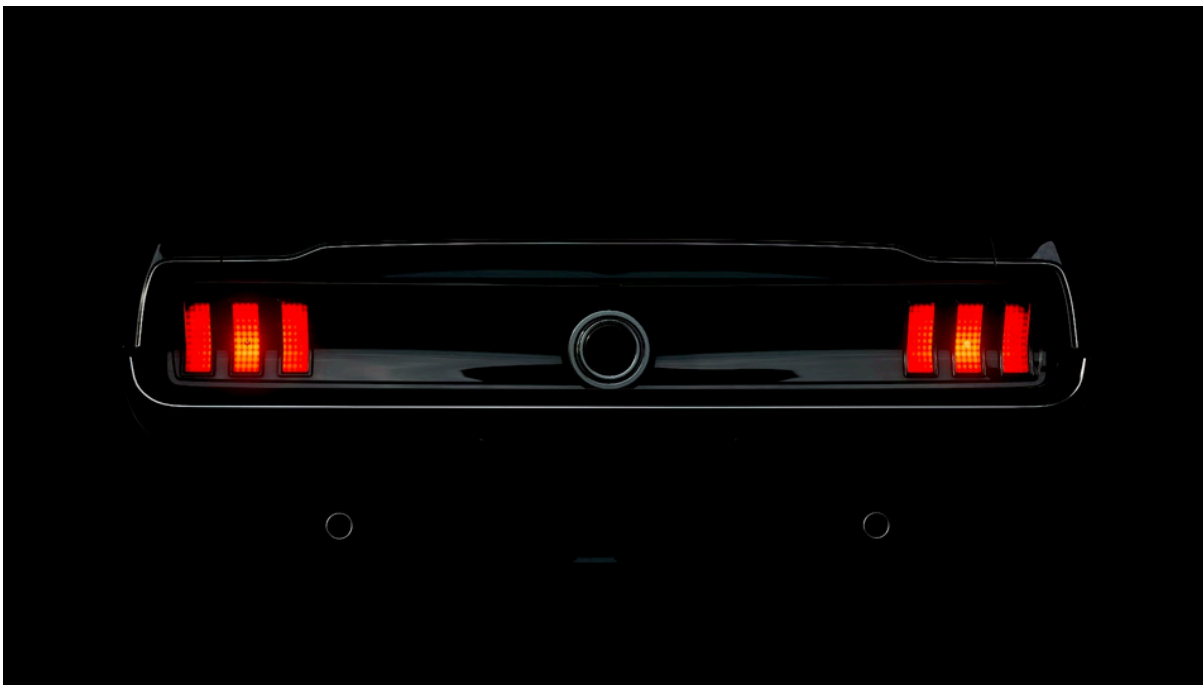
CCOCAS2
Forza Horizon 5

"VP is my remedy for everyday stress.

Both photos were taken in the same location, increasing the exposure and contrast with a small touch of vignetting."

VP&ME WITH
MICHI.MEDIA

Get ready for a journey through time and space as we are joined by this year's Winner of "Creator of the Year" (The Photo Mode Awards) **michi.media**.

Find out how she started her VP journey and how growing up in the 90's has influenced her photography style.

○ @MICHI.MEDIA   ✕ @MICHIMEDIAVP

My VP Journey started in 2016. Rockstar had just released the Rockstar Editor for GTA5, and I quickly became a fan of the tools. I enjoyed creating images of my gameplay - my perspective on the video game - if you will. Not too long after discovering my new hobby, I would start joining Screenshot Clubs on Xbox. I met so many friendly people through this hobby - one of them being Ultra Violetra, which brings us up to date. She recommended I join Social Media because she felt more people would like to see my VP, and so it happened. I even competed in a couple of contests and actually managed to win some of them. My most significant achievement in the VP realm is winning Creator of the Year 2025 in the Photo Mode Awards.

What is your favourite game to capture, and what is it that you like about the photo mode in that game?

One of my favorite games to capture is Starfield, but I won't lie - the photo mode is really, really simple, so I will instead talk about the photo mode in Cyberpunk 2077, another game I love. The PM now offers a wide range of options after being updated. I love that you can now change the weather and have spotlights - This lets you set the right mood and lighting. Additionally, they have added many new poses, which are so fun to experiment with. You can adjust almost everything—filters, filter strength, and more.

Some of your images feel like fragments of a larger, almost subconscious world. What inspires these shots and where do you draw influence to your VP?

Well, I am a 90s kid, and growing up, I couldn't help but notice that the world is changing so rapidly that now, in 2025, it almost feels like a „new place" entirely. So, what I'm trying to say is that living life nowadays feels practically alien. You're „new" to a place that should seem familiar. I try to express this in my pictures. For anyone who knows me and my VP, this probably makes perfect sense, as I love using Astronauts' clothing in games. I wanna get off this planet haha.

What role does color play in your storytelling? (You use muted tones and light pops of color really effectively.)

Color (besides) light decides the image's mood - like a bright yellow indicates we're happy and a dark blue says it's a moody time. Muted tones in pictures almost seem weathered - you feel like time has passed and left the environment „faded". It tells a story by itself.

You're known for your (portraits/minimal/landscape etc.) photography, what about the genre do you think speaks to you? And is there a genre you'd like to experiment with more?

I like to notice things around me. It doesn't matter if it's while I'm on a walk in the park or while I walk through Video Games. Minimalism lets you set up a whole scene around just one object - like invisible wrapping. I am open to a lot of different styles and genres, but nothing in particular. It comes and goes as my mood changes.

There's a mix of cosmic, cinematic, and grounded human imagery in your feed. What draws you to these worlds?

When we were kids, we had this habit of creating imaginary worlds, scenarios, etc. Now, video game developers do that for us, so I dive right into the worlds they create for us.
My favorite aspect of otherworldly imagery is that it exists without rules or laws. No one will tell you that something seems out of place or that something shouldn't be the way that it is. It's up to your imagination. The cinematic aspect probably comes from my love for movies - I've watched A LOT of movies in my life.

You're also a real-world photographer. What would you say are the similarities and differences between that and virtual photography?

Well, it's kinda the same just different (?) Just like in real life you would find YOUR POV and take a picture of something you like looking at but it depends on the photo mode as well. If you have a free cam like in Cyberpunk 2077, it feels more like real life, and it's easier, but there's photo modes with cameras fixed to the character or no ability to move the camera at all, and this is where it gets tricky.

If you could create a photo mode, what would be your top 5 features?

My top 5 photo mode features would be
a free-moving camera,
Field of View/Depth of Field slider,
Time/Weather adjustment,
Spotlights and of course, for portraits the ability to move your
character around

How has your view of virtual photography changed since you started?

It hasn't really changed. It just became bigger. There are so many
people sharing their game captures, and I didn't know it was called
Virtual Photography until I joined social media two years ago.

What advice would you give to someone who is new to virtual photography?

Well, if you want to take game captures, then just enjoy the
process - find your own angles and POV, and most importantly,
find your own style. Rotate the camera 90 degrees, see what that
does for you. Use the given tools and make them work for you.
There's no boundaries.

AreeLyBadPun

In this issue we catch up with **Juha Vainio**, Executive Producer, Head of the Control Franchise at **Remedy Entertainment**. We ask about the creation of the photo mode and what the Virtual Photography Community means to him.

Joined by Design Director Stuart Macdonald and Level Designer Anne-Marie Grönroos, we find out how the Old House came to life.

⃝ 𝕏 🦋 @Yuuhaw

CONTROL

It's been more than six years since CONTROL released in August 2019 and a couple of months later you implemented the photo mode.

What was the inspiration behind the decision to include a photo mode?

The photo mode had actually been planned and designed already earlier, but in order to focus on finishing up the actual game, we had to postpone the release of the photo mode to a later update. We knew we had a beautiful game coming and wanted to support people appreciating the beauty and putting their own creativity into play through that.

The decision to implement the photo mode to our game was driven from several directions. We have quite a bunch of people active in the social media at the company and the virtual photographer community hadn't gone unnoticed. The actual decision to include the photo mode was a very easy one in the end.

What went into creating and designing the photo mode? Were you influenced by other photo modes?

We had a small photo mode task force designing and implementing the functionality. Most, if not all, of the design itself was on one of our Senior Gameplay Designers who dug into what was out there already in other games, and picked the cherries on top to fit them to CONTROL. Of course it's never just that simple but I believe we did an OK job in the end.

minimuffinchucker

spideroftsushima

dharlequin

What were your thoughts on balancing creative freedom of the photo mode while maintaining the games storytelling integrity?

We at Remedy are big believers on feeding the creativity of our community and we are fans of many of our fans. Looking through that lens, it's not a surprise that we go all in on unblocking also the creative freedom of the virtual photographers and see what they can come up with. We tell the story we want to tell but after that, it's all a free game, be it fan art, fan fiction, virtual photography, ... anything really.

Will there be any updates to the photo mode itself?

The whole CONTROL team is hard at work on CONTROL 2 so we probably won't be updating the photo mode on CONTROL anymore. Never say never, though.

Did you ever expect you would have such a dedicated community still capturing the game years after its release?

We totally didn't expected that and it has been absolutely mind-blowing to see the VP community embracing CONTROL year after year, and see all the amazing virtual photographs on a daily basis still.

mroosa

Q&A
WITH
JUHA VAINIO

The brutalist architecture in the Oldest House creates a perfect setting for virtual photography. Could you tell us a little about the architecture in the game?

For us it was always clear that CONTROL would take place in a single building, the Oldest House, in New York, and the building would be bigger on the inside than it looked on the outside. Our World Design Director has an official degree in architecture so the building was in good hands. For more details, I needed to go to the man himself, CONTROL's World **Design Director Stuart Macdonald**:

"Well the architectural style of the Oldest house is of course Brutalism. Brutalism is almost sculptural in approach, it celebrates raw use of material and pure use of form and light.

The main inspirations and references were North American government and other institutions. Some references are the Boston City Hall, the Andrews Building in Toronto University (often used as a filming location, for example Del Toro's Shape of Water) and the Met Breuer in New York. For the game itself we wanted to tease the outside world just beyond reach so there's a lot of use of skylights and lightwells, another reason was so we could properly use architectural lighting, something that ray tracing finally allowed us to properly explore.

Lighting design is essential for concrete architecture to really come alive. Look at architects such as Tadao Ando (known as a master of light) and famous architectural photographers such as Lucien Hervé and Hélène Binet for inspiration on how these spaces are captured.

The levels themselves were then designed for a character that can essentially fly: so lots of big volumes and few columns to get in the way. In addition, a real bureau building might be a lot of corridors and small rooms, but that wouldn't make such an interesting place so it is instead designed like a 17th century mansion: lots of interconnected spaces and as little corridors as we could have."

TheMoltenCat

One fascinating area in the game and very well suited for photos, is the Ashtray Maze. What inspired that?

The Ashtray Maze is definitely amazing and it is probably the most talked-about area in the game. Originally it was meant to be just an "interesting section" that we'd use to connect two areas, instead of just putting a boring corridor in place. Some visual inspiration was drawn from the hotel corridor from the Coen brothers' film Barton Fink, some ideas were going towards a mirrored maze. In fact, the Ashtray Maze was originally called Smoke and Mirrors Maze during development.

The actual creative powerhouse behind the Ashtray Maze was our **Level Designer Anne-Marie Grönroos**, and I turned to her to ask about the creative process:

"At the start there was just an early synopsis detailing that there is this corridor that leads back to the start, until you put on Ahti's headphones and the maze shifts around Jesse and lets her pass.

Integrating the song from the headphones as a key component was one of the first ideas but there was a struggle to see how to combine puzzle-type of gameplay with a song. The problem was to keep the player moving and not get stuck for longer periods of time in solving how to move forward in an actual maze. To kick things forward, a prototype was made with the core idea of misdirecting the player with false exits, and after the initial confusing moments reveal the real exit quickly afterwards. This made the maze feel disorienting and maze-like, but had the player constantly moving.

A very important aspect of the design of the Ashtray Maze was, to uphold the illusion of a maze, that there is no difference between the static pieces and the dynamic pieces of the maze, so that new corridors could appear anywhere, and the path forward could be closed at any moment.

To finalize the Ashtray Maze experience there is of course the song, '**Take Control' by** <u>Poets of the Fall</u> **/ Old Gods of Asgard**. The song is dynamic and proceeds when the player is progressing through the maze but doesn't when the player is in combat or otherwise static. The song first of all was split to eleven bigger parts that correspond to different sections in the maze. And each part is split into about a dozen sub-parts to keep the song interesting within the sections. So there are over 100 musical pieces that make up 'Take Control'."

Do you have a favorite area or part of the game?

The Ashtray Maze is definitely one of my favorites and I do have quite a few others as well, but maybe I could highlight the Black Rock Quarry. During development it was the one that kept visually stunning me every time we reviewed it. It's such a different look compared to the other areas in the Oldest House. And you can definitely get absolutely awesome virtual photographs from there, with the starry sky and all.

gingerbread94
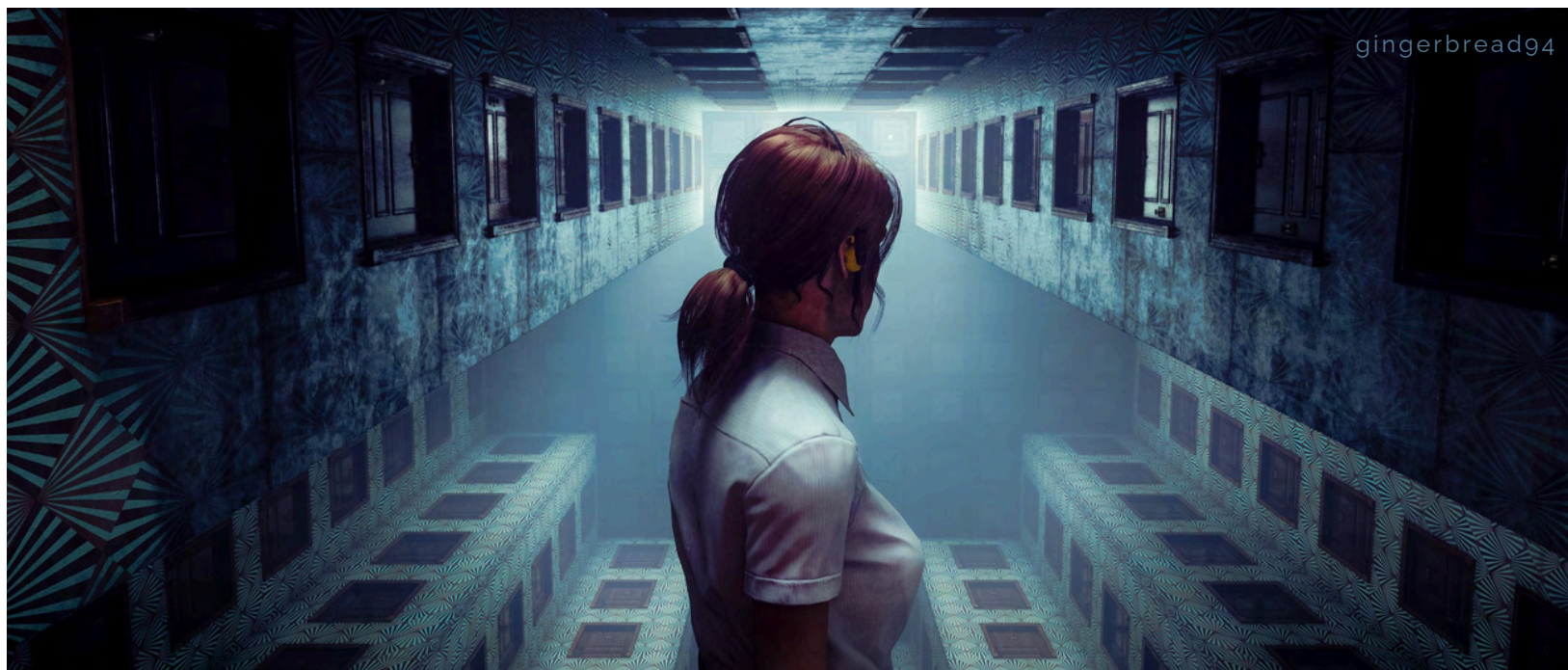
rogues_frontier

lensesandpixels

DJKE11ER2488

At Remedy, you are incredibly supportive and interactive with the virtual photography community, and you often interact with VPs on social media yourself.

What are your views on virtual photography as a company?

I can only speak on behalf of the CONTROL Franchise but I know that many people here also outside my franchise share my views.

Having spent countless of hours looking at all the amazing shots you guys have posted from CONTROL, it's difficult to overstate the personal impact it has had on me, or the importance in keeping the game relevant for years and years. Seeing all the talent and creativity around virtual photography also inspires us to do our best work. I really love the circle of inspiration at play here - our game feeds your inspiration that in turn feeds our inspiration.

Are there any standout or particularly memorable photos or VP events by players in the community?

OMG there are so many. I feel I would do a disservice highlighting any because I can't possibly highlight all! I feel that still every week I see shots that blow my mind. On CONTROL obviously, but other games as well. And the community creativity around different themes is also overwhelming and it's super fun to follow what kinds of themes and what kinds of shots within different themes you guys come up with.

Events-wise I'm always excited when something is on but maybe being a Judge on The Photo Mode Awards 2025 was the best experience so far, seeing the best of the best pictures taken during the year, all of them being such stunning pieces of art. It was very difficult picking the best pictures in each category, but also very rewarding.

Q&A
WITH
JUHA VAINIO

Are there any sort of photos from the game that you would like to see more of?

They are all awesome so anything goes! Having said that, I do enjoy when something unexpected or surprising happens and someone manages to capture that moment. Like explosion happening just right, or a glitch somewhere makes the shot especially funny. But really, I am super happy just seeing whatever you guys want to be shooting and exercising your own creativity.

What can the VP community expect in the future from Remedy and Control, in terms of events and support?

I can't give any details but let's just say, we'll continue to support the VP community and continue to participate and organize events as much as we can. 505 Games did amazing work on the VP community side ever since we launched CONTROL and now that we're on our own with the franchise, we will keep the same standard and aspire to elevate it even higher.

hazelgreen_vp

wingsforsmiles

MdeavorVP

"I first played Control in September 2020 and I got the platinum trophy in a week. It just hit perfectly at the time and it will probably stay in my top 10 of games for years to come. It's such a unique game and I'm impressed by how Remedy were able to blend so many different genres together.

Control wasn't the first game I played with a photo mode but it has been the one that I've captured the most. I find The Oldest House to be an endless source of inspiration. One of the things I love about the game is that you never know what will happen when you enter a room. And even after all these years I'm still finding new details and have yet to run out of things to capture.

The game's photo mode is fairly bare bones but it has some of my favorite filters and can be used to make some incredibly diverse shots.

It lends itself to creativity and experimentation just as much as the visuals of the game itself. I love that you can shoot the game in so many different styles – from action to abstraction, portraits, and minimalism. I'd say it helped to improve the way I do virtual photography in general.

The fact that we're still posting about the game 6 years after it released is a testament to the community supported by Remedy. It's awesome that they are so supportive of the virtual photography community especially, not only on social media but on their official website as well. The monthly Faden Friday blog posts were always a highlight and it was so much fun to see who would be included in each one. Can't wait to see what Control 2 has in store for us."

m_nt_13

#TPM
Control

"As far as I can remember I've always been a small part of the Control community since it first released back on the 27th August 2019. Always trying my very best to support all that had the game, even Juha Vainio himself started following me. Which I thought was quite strange at the time, because I did not have the game. I just remember what he said to me one day "It doesn't matter if you have the game or not, I think you're talented! So when you do get your hands on a copy, I'll be waiting to see what you do with it." Oh how little did I know, that it would take me 4 years & 2 months to finally find a physical PS5 ultimate edition copy. But Hey! What can I say, I'm old fashioned & there's just something about having a physical copy to hold. So on the 27th October 2023, the day had finally come; I was so excited because that's where my Control journey officially started! Not only in playing this fantastic game, but as a virtual photographer taking lots of Altered Items, oh I mean thousands of photos using the games dedicated photo mode.

Everything seemed to happen so fast from here, with all the support I constantly received on my new journey from Juha Vainio, the Control Remedy & VP community, Remedy Games including the one & only Antonela Pounder from 505 games that used to run the #FadenFriday & #JesseJanuary showcase blog. All of this inspired me to unlock my passion for Control VP & Artwork. So much so that I had a big surprise, getting one of my Jesse Faden artworks featured on 505 community showcases, back in April 2024 on

Control's official news on PlayStation. With this came the honor of being followed by Control Remedy & 505 Games on both X & Instagram. With a very special gift sent to me form Juha & Remedy Entertainment all the way from Finland. Since then I've had a few blessings of being featured in the blogs & again this year for the 2025 Jesse January showcase on PS official news.

Now it's time to talk about… yes you guessed it, photo mode! When Control released an update for photo mode on 16 October 2019, it lit up the whole VP community. This is a great entry-level photo mode, allowing you to control the camera, camera roll, the field of view, depth of field, aperture & with ten photo filters you can play around with. This is for anyone who wants to start or pursue a passion in VP. There are endless possibilities in the Control VP universe, whether you want to shoot Jesse, NPC's, the Hiss, architecture, minimalistic or go full on abstract. Control offers a stunning & creative virtual photography experience. With a community full of amazing people all-round, you definitely can't go wrong in joining all of us FBC agents in the Oldest House.

Thank you for the opportunity to do this and for everything the TMP team does for the VP community."
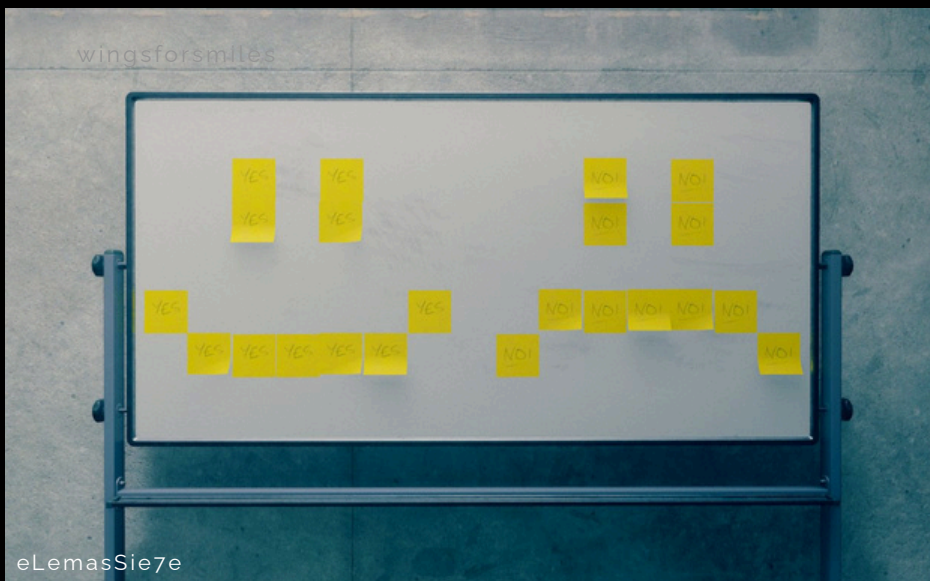
Raider_Warrior

FrameCaptured

LeftKee

DJKE11ER2488

wingsforsmiles
eLemasSie7e

Binary_Voids

"I was just getting into VP when a friend sent me a link to a game called Control… he thought I would like it. He sold me on it by telling me that it has a photo mode.

Honestly, I didn't know anything about the game and was a bit lost at first, but the game intrigued me. The more I started wandering around, the more mysterious the game became. I love dark, weird, and atmospheric games.

When I got my first powers, I was feeling the game; once I realized that it is a Metroidvania style game, I was locked in and ready for the journey. Control quickly became my favorite game.

The game is a piece of art and I'm so happy that it has a photo mode. The developers have created an interesting world to play, to see, and to experience. The mood, atmosphere, and aesthetic of the game speak to me in a way that fosters the sort of captures that I like to create. The game is also perfect for the minimalist approach, which I really enjoy. Control was my first Remedy game… but hasn't been my last.

Control is so much of a playground for VP that I feel like I can treat the photo mode like I'm playing a game-running around, finding the best spots for in-game lighting, finding interesting backgrounds, utilizing visual effects, and using the in-game atmosphere. With the game's PM filters, I can get creative and experiment with new, interesting approaches to capturing.

The game was released six years ago, yet I see new and interesting captures coming from the VP community each day.

If it wasn't for Control, I probably wouldn't have found the VP community. After posting a few shots, the VP community and people from the Remedy team welcomed me. I am always amazed at how much support Remedy gives back to the artistic communities out here. I can't think of any other studio that is as actively involved as they are. Juha Vainio (Executive Producer/Former Director of the Oldest House) in particular is a wonderful person who has shown our community so much love and support over the years. He does so much, including leaving wonderful comments, sharing our shots with his team, and getting actively involved with community events and themes.

Remedy recently released an enhancement update for consoles that includes many performance improvements. In particular, the HDR update has given me more of what I love-I now find myself wandering around the Oldest House with new eyes.

I have never been so excited to reshoot a game. This update will hold me over until Control 2 is released.

A big thank you to the Remedy team for not only making such an amazing game but also for all the love and support that comes with it."
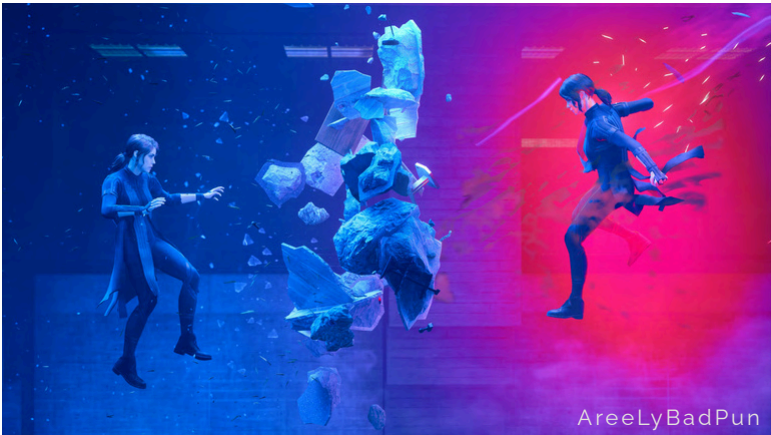
FrameCaptured / BP
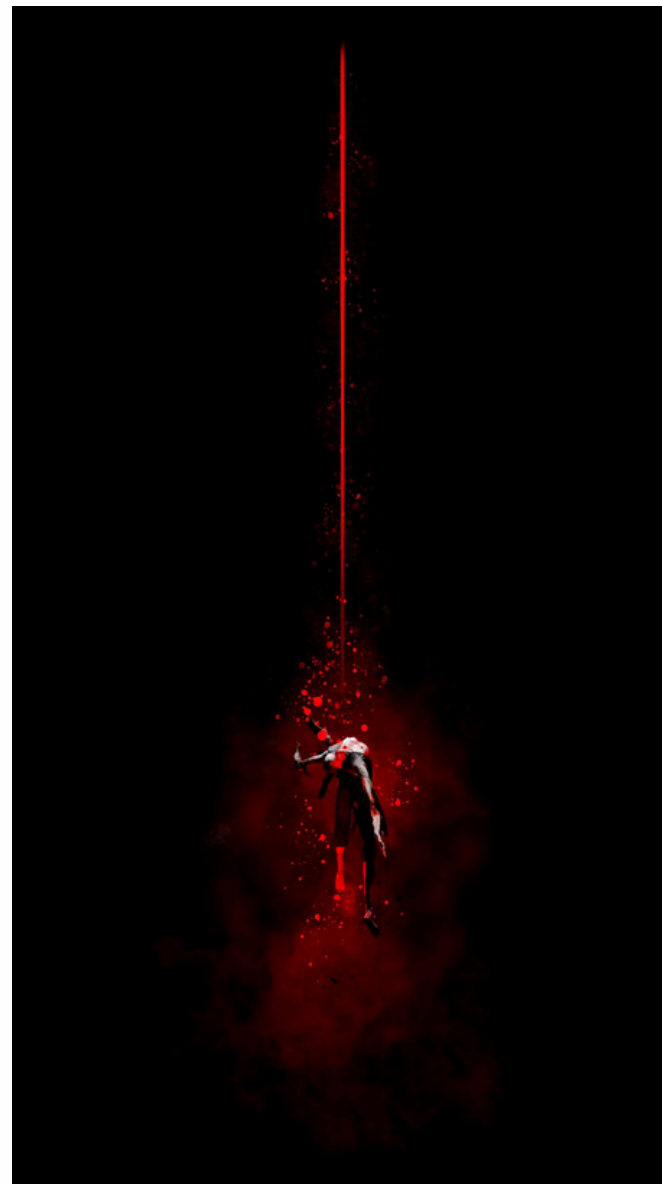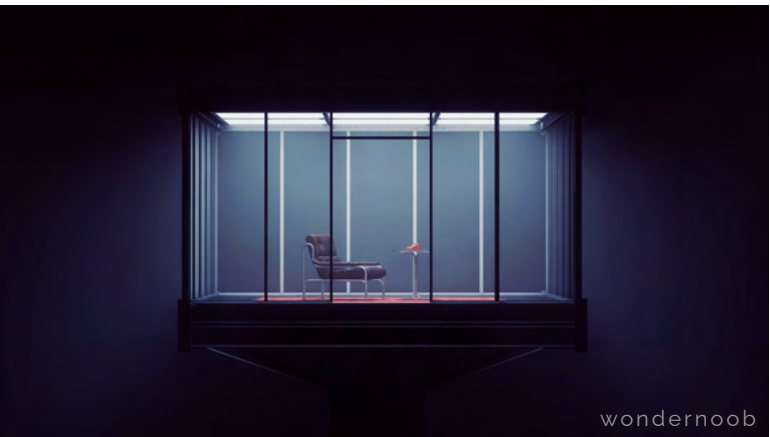
MdeavorVP

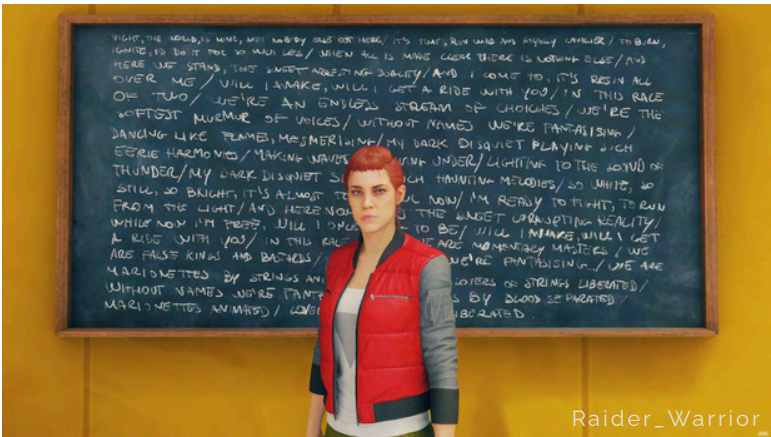Subly_pics

tammyquarry
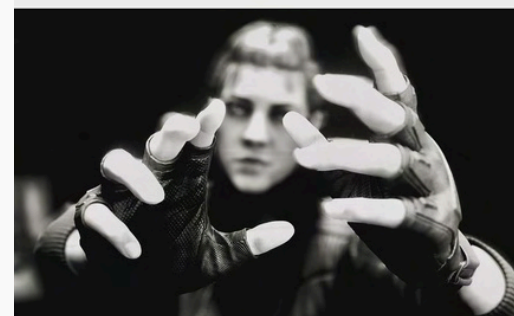

dharlequin

AreeLyBadPun

wingsforsmiles

wondernoob

Raider_Warrior

THEME
SPOTLIGHT

"For a long time, I considered myself to be in what I like to call "gamer retirement." I'd enjoyed playing video games as a teen, but as the years went by, I found myself playing less until I stopped altogether. It wasn't until about two and a half years ago that I finally picked up a controller again. As luck would have it, Control was one of the first games that I played when I came back to gaming, and it quickly became one of my all-time favorites. It's really my love for the game that both inspires and challenges me as a virtual photographer. Though I would still consider myself a beginner, it's been amazing to find a new creative outlet and to join this vibrant community full of talented and passionate people."
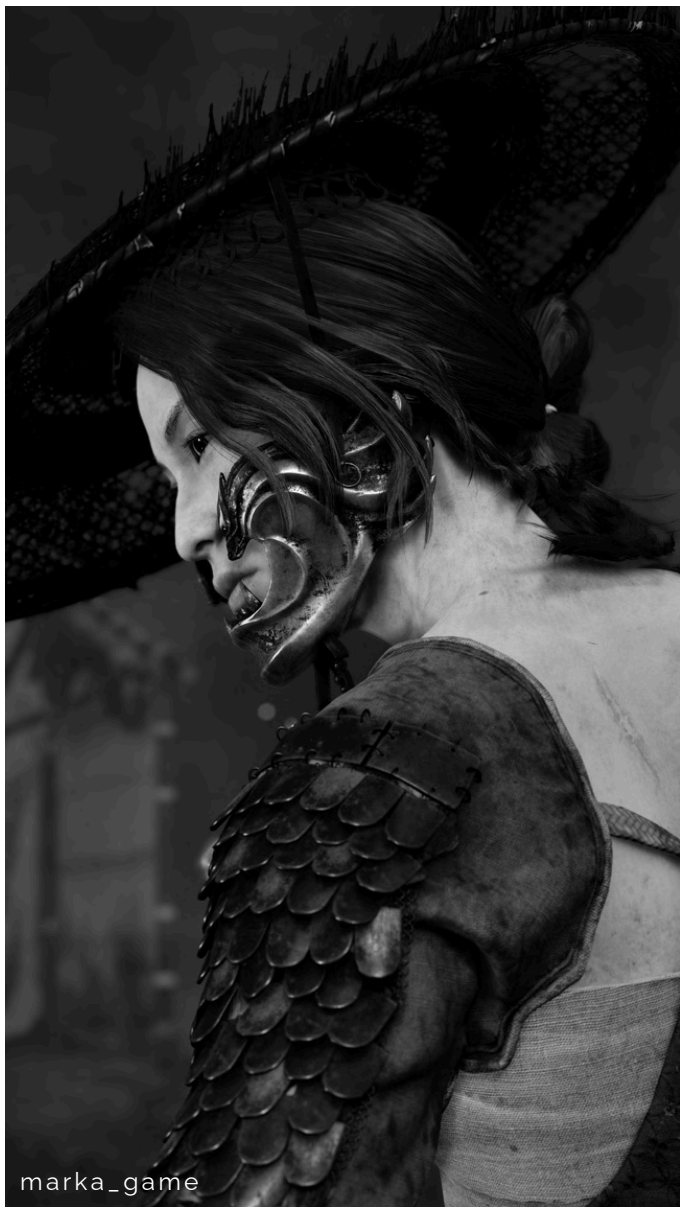
oceanview.vp

amich-vp

hazelgreen_vp

Sofia_in_NC

erin7696

GHOST OF YOTEI

Foxhound_VP

marka_game

BetweenDPixels

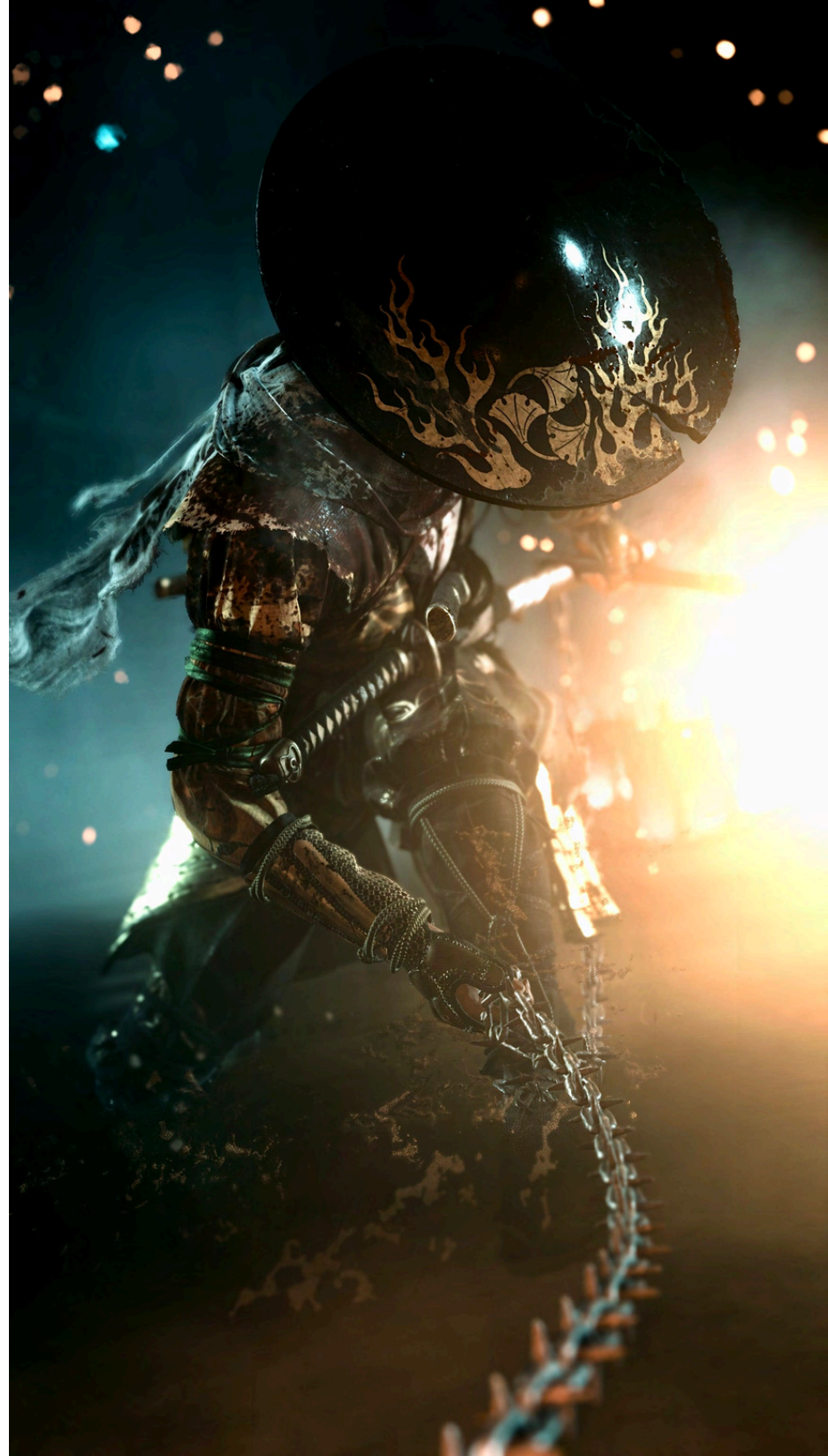spideytwoshoes

reddeadgem

9b75

tnovixvp

thwippip

THEME
SPOTLIGHT

HowieVP

Virtual photography is one of my favorite creative outlets. I'm a full-time safety coordinator, a husband, and a father to an amazing three-year-old boy. I also play drums in a band, draw, play piano, and dabble in traditional photography. After work, fatherhood, and being a husband, virtual photography helps me decompress and stay creative.

As soon as I acquired this armor set and hat, I knew I wanted to capture something dark and powerful. When I create a character portrait, I always aim for something I'd be proud to frame and hang on my wall.

norica_captures

spideroftsushima

MistyMalorne

sirbertimus_vp

wistfulembrace_
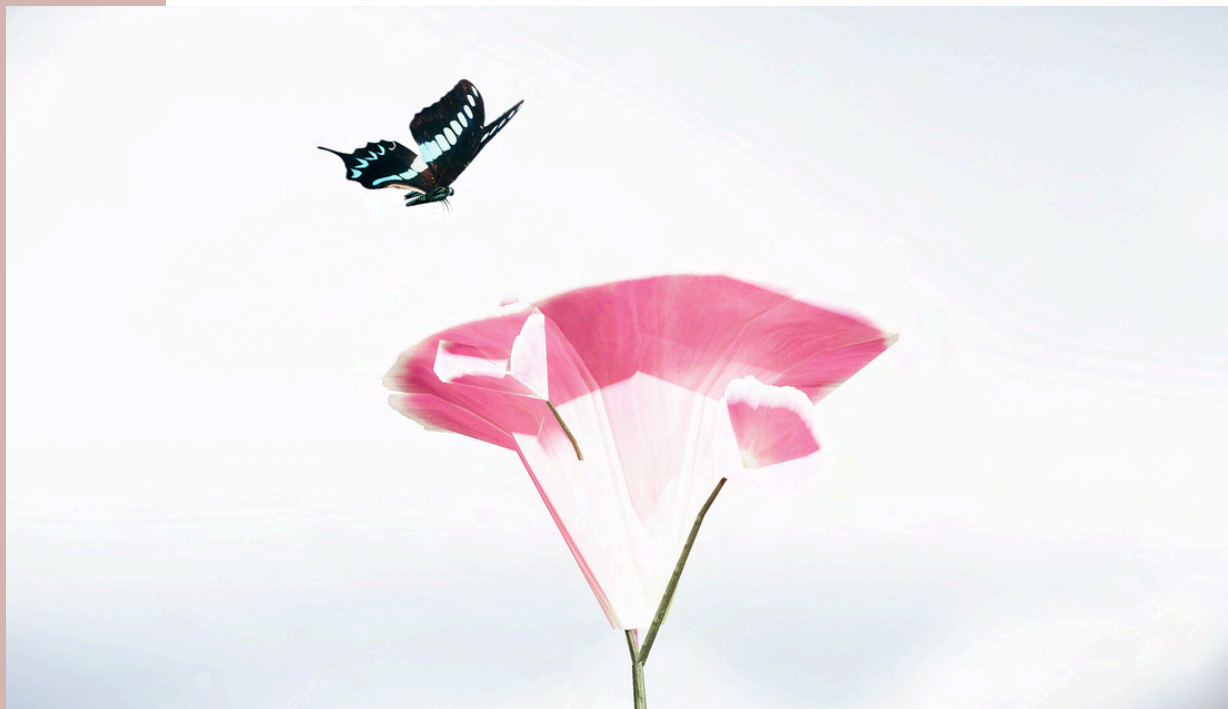
darthgildreinn

wa_ca_bi

Faerk7

jchouk

UYScuti10
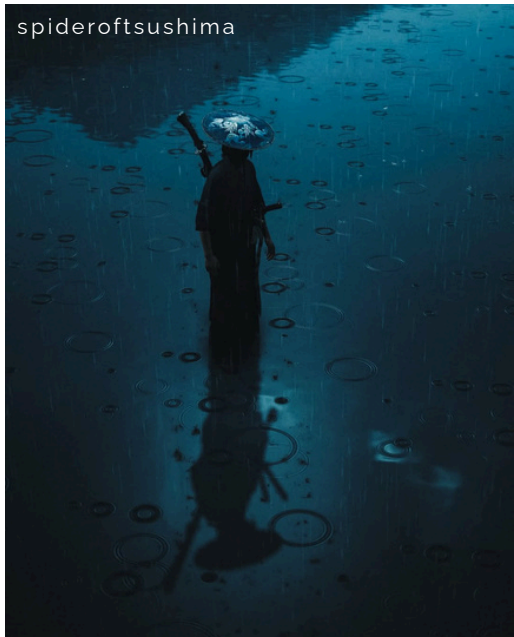
sill__vp

"Hello! I'm Silvia and I live in Italy. I started playing with the PlayStation for the first time (more precisely with my first PS4) in March 2020, the year the pandemic broke out. I remember that month was very critical and difficult for me from many points of view. There was a lockdown for 2 and a half months, which meant I couldn't go out and I didn't know what to do. So I decided to buy the PS4 to pass the time better. The package included, in addition to the console, 3 games, including: "Horizon Zero Dawn", "Uncharted 4" and "The Last of Us I".

They were my first games, and at first I remember that I didn't like them very much but then suddenly something changed. I started playing them for hours and hours and entire days. I started to feel part of that world, as if I was living the character's story. I felt so many emotions at the same time (and still do today when I play them). They kept me company the whole time and became my favourite games ever!

Then it happened that on March 15, 2023, I discovered the photo mode for the first time and I decided to open a VP page to publish photos of Aloy (from "Horizon Zero Dawn") simply for fun and entertainment. But I didn't think it would become such a big thing and above all that I'd get this far. For me it was a truly incredible discovery, like when Christopher Columbus discovered America, same thing! In that distant 2020, a journey began for me and I can't wait to find out where else it will take me.

And about the two shots I took: in the first one I simply increased the focal length to the maximum, so that the lens was as close as possible to the flower. Then I activated the "particles" and chose the butterflies and decreased their intensity to try to find the right butterfly that came as close as possible to the flower, as if it wanted to land on it. And in the second one, I took inspiration from the location (in "Horizon Forbidden West") at the beginning in the cut scene, when Aloy meets her mother Elisabet Sobeck in the flower field under the big tree and in Ghost of Yotēi I wanted to do more or less the same thing. I depicted Atsu in the middle of a flower field playing her shamisen under a tree and then to make the shot a little more dreamy, I changed the time of day and the weather (it was almost sunset) and in the editing I used a pink/orange palette. And in the end I added the "particles", the "song birds", which fly behind Atsu, just as if she were in a dream."

GrayFoxVP

Whip_Wisp

PeekerParter646

nimmu

calisarah1998

flacko.raf

#TPM
Lights

anticowl
Dystopika

aggzgaming
Cyberpunk 2077

vinnies.vp
Hell Is Us

ml3nium
Resident Evil 4

den_g
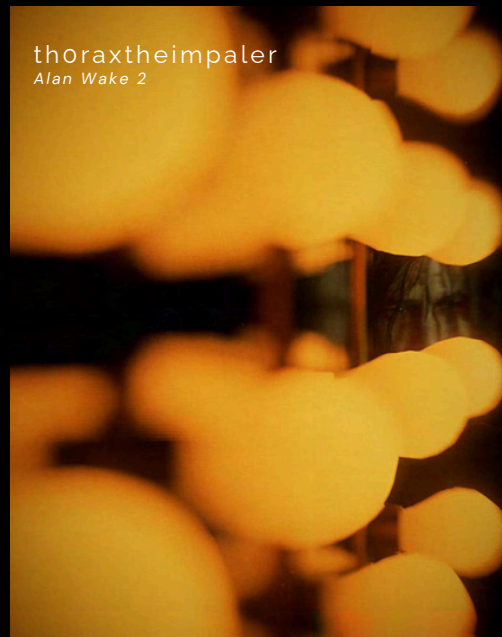*Boderlands 3*
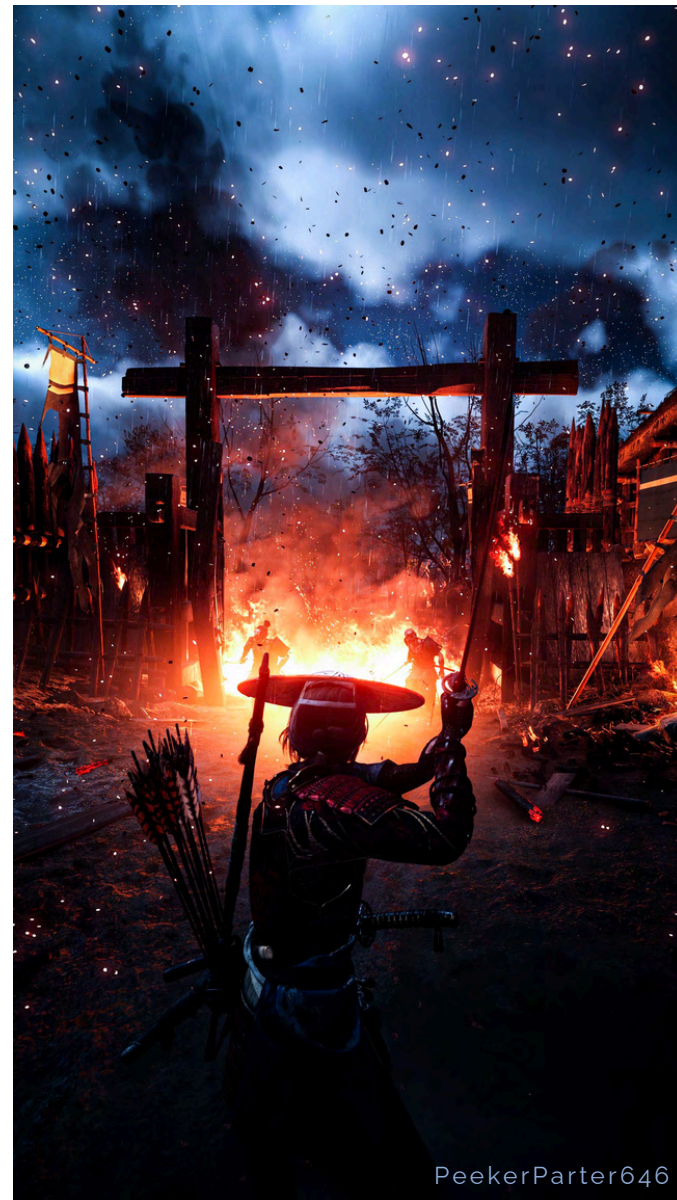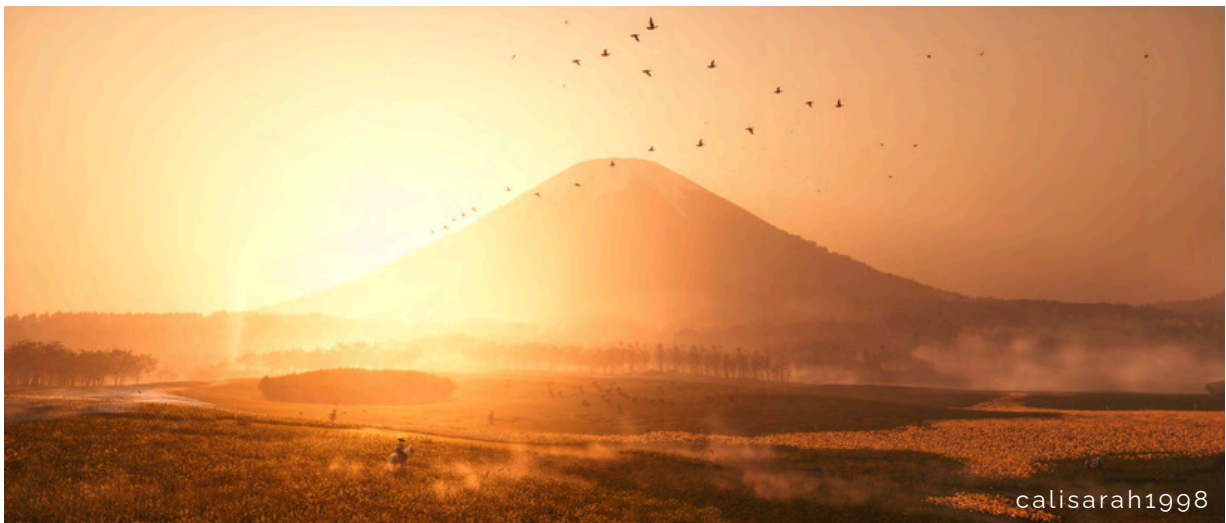
virtual_koda
The Crew Motorfest

thoraxtheimpaler
Alan Wake 2

deadeyecaptures
Ghost of Tsushima

theonlyjess_vp
Alan Wake 2

waterpelyn
Red Dead Redemption 2

"Hello, I'm Pelyn! I'm a virtual photographer from a small little corner of the world in Wales. I got into VP a couple of years ago when I discovered the Horizon franchise. Since then I have always casually captured shots while gaming. What started as a small creative outlet quickly became a huge part of my life, leading me to share my work on social media last year.

I've always loved "breaking the fourth wall" with virtual photography. I connect deeply with the worlds and characters I explore, and love bringing them to life through my own lens.

Building my PC this year has given me even more of an urge to capture. Suddenly I had access to spaces, tools, and worlds that just weren't possible on console. The freedom of PC and mods is what allowed me to capture this set from Red Dead Redemption 2. Using Rampage Trainer, I was able to switch character models and capture the Van Der Linde ladies behind the Saint Denis market lights, combining two of my favourite elements of photography; portraiture and bokeh.

When I saw TPM was hosting the lights theme, I was extremely excited as it felt like the perfect chance to use my favourite tool on PC: the igcs.dof connector by Frans "Otis_Inf" Bouma.

My obsession with bokeh has only grown since discovering otis_inf, and this theme felt like the perfect moment to show off just how magical it can be.

Building my PC has taught me so much, and this whole year has been full of learning curves in the best way. If there's one thing VP continues to teach me, it's that anything worth doing takes practice, and if you want to improve, you never stop learning.

In the words of Viktor "There is no prize to perfection, only an end to pursuit."

THEME SPOTLIGHT

PhotoModeColin
Cyperpunk 2077

Hettaïr
Pokémon Legends: Z-A

DEATH STRANDING 2
ON THE BEACH

rogues-frontier
Death Strangding 2

CharApof
Dystopika

secondcaptures
Hogwarts Legacy

francis_films
Gotham Knights

wingsforsmiles
Alan Wake 2

wondernoob
Sifu

s.picturez
NinjaGaiden4

summers458
F1 25

dearmythara
Cyberpunk 2077

archiehanna3
Spiderman 2

lushshading
Silent Hill f

ayob_vp
Red Dead Redemption 2

"I'm Maya, a virtual photographer from Croatia. I've been taking screenshots in games for years, but only in recent year have I started to dabble with virtual photography more seriously.
My focus is first and foremost on playing the game, so I don't produce as much photography as I would like, but I am working on that. Majority of VP I take are portraits, so lately I've been trying to expand my style and my eye and take more varied scenery shots.

When I saw the #TPMLights tag as November's challenge, this was the first place that came to my mind.

Treviso, my city of romance, coffee and wine, lights, music, and murder.

Dragon Age Veilguard has countless beautiful locations, but this is one of my favorite little corners. I adore countless rows of lights illuminating market stalls, making it look like something magical.

And these particular lanterns in the shot are my favorite design, so I wanted to focus closely on them. They have a simultaneously festive but also romantic and cozy feeling.

Whenever I boot up Veilguard, I make sure to stop by Treviso Markets and enjoy the atmosphere. I can imagine myself wandering under those lights or just sitting down with a glass of wine, enjoying the view while Spanish guitar plays in the background."

thedaswolves
Dragon Age: The Veilguard

WELCOME TO SAINT DENIS

#THE PHOTOMODE

thepunsofus
Red Dead Redemption 2

pixel8ed_vp
Forza Horizon 5

whatthevic.vp
Riders Republic

virtual_koda
Kirby Air Riders

secondcapture
Fortnite

bgaming1245
Horizon Forbidden West

TempoUo
Spider-Man 2

vrphotogamess
Death Stranding 2

"I'm a girl who has always loved video games and photography since I was little, and when I discovered that I could combine these two passions, it became my new favorite hobby. I always try to convey something with my shots even through the smallest details and above all, I always try to best represent the beauty of that game I'm photographing and I'm always happy when the people who follow me can understand what I want to say with that shot.

Regarding this shot, I can say that I simply wanted to represent a moment between Sam and Lou where, after a long time of not seeing each other, they finally saw each other again in their new adventure.

At that moment in the game there was this beautiful sunset and being a lover of silhouettes I wanted Sam to pick up Lou and look at her smiling - you can't see it here but Lou had it too - a happy expression as she was looking at him. When I look at this shot I think of all the moments you can see in DS2 with Sam and Lou that you can see even at the beginning of the game, it's my absolute favorite shot I've ever taken in DS2."
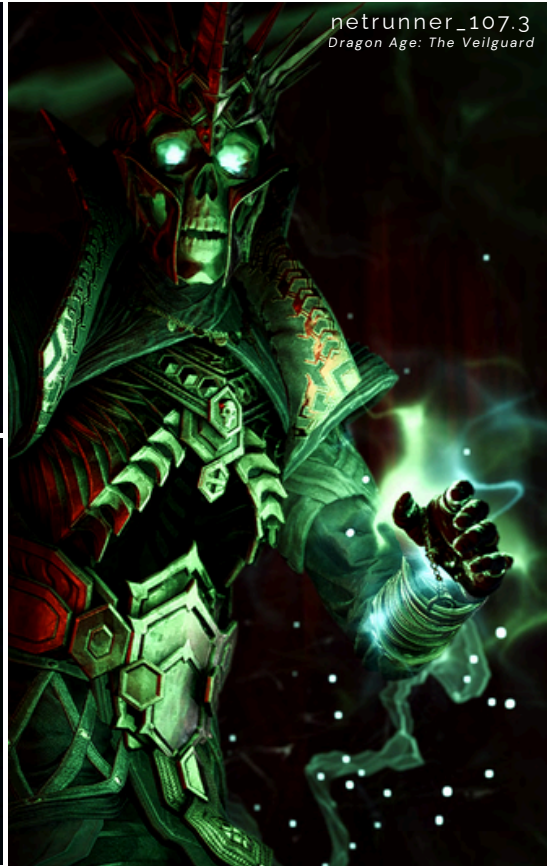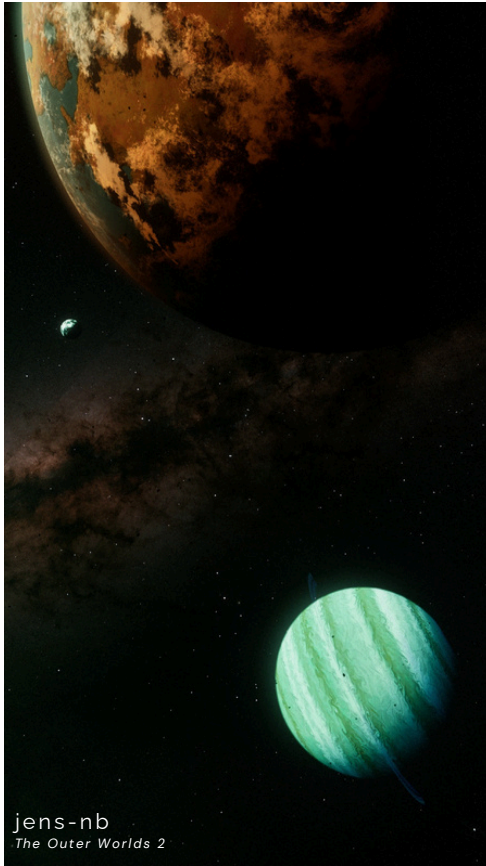
faerk_7
Senua's Saga: Hellblade 2

GioWayne86
Death Stranding 2

GenieCrazy
The Witcher 3

netrunner_107.3
Dragon Age: The Veilguard

KorolevaKrasta
Clair Obscure: Expedition 33

Murphygamephoto
The Last of Us Part 2

@MURPHYGAMEPHOTO

jens-nb
The Outer Worlds 2

eleyaplaysgames
Fortnite
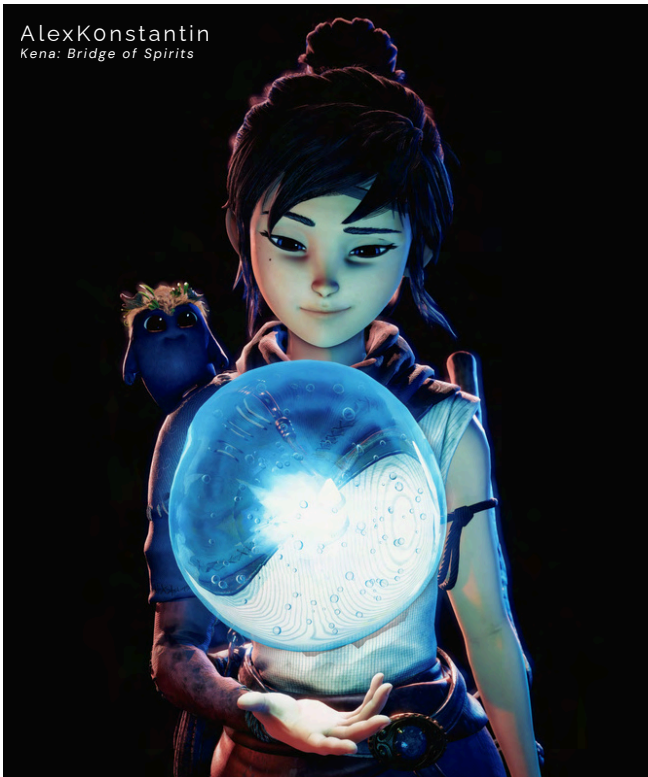
jackbyrnesyt
The Last of Us Part II

OnlyMisuna
Cyberpunk 2077

RalstonVP
Starfield

AlexKonstantin
Kena: Bridge of Spirits

Xavi
Where Winds Meet

Madgalena
Baldurs Gate 3

revendi_vp
Wuthering Waves

innerpause

Red Dead Redemption 2
The Last of Us Part II
Lushfoil
Death Stranding 2

"Virtual photography is where two of my deepest passions, photography and video games, collide and create something personal out of a shared experience.

It's not just about snapping pixels; it's an extension of how I express myself, blending the passion of photography with the endless possibilities of digital worlds."

"I started my VP journey in Cyberpunk in 2024, so I haven't done it long. I started doing VP because I was modding my game a lot and I saw a lot of very good preview pictures and was very interested how they got so good quality pictures, so I took it upon myself to teach myself as much as I could about VP alongside modding since most of the times I couldn't find the mods I exactly wanted so out of spite I made my own mods. I mostly love doing portraits, getting close and personal with characters, I am always learning and trying to improve myself by trying to take shots out of my comfort zone. I am learning something new every time I take a picture.

I have tried a bit of real-life photography as well and I have to say, Virtual Photography is way easier to me at least. Boot up the game, find a cool spot or subject and you will have control over a lot of elements, lighting, poses etc. (i realise you can do that in real life as well but as an amateur photographer, it's not really an option). I can barely go through a game nowadays without going "oh stop this is a good place for a picture" and then continuing to spend like a bunch of time taking the picture.

I take a lot of my pictures with 3rd party camera tools coupled with Reshade fx, I've gathered over the year.

For posing and lights Uneral Unlocker is amazing. Having the control over lights and over every bone and you can save the poses for later use. I don't do presets most of the time. I tweak all my shots manually since every shot is different and i don't use any post touch up on any of my photos (with exception of occasional very bad clipping/weird splotches/mouse cursor).

I remember when I was starting up, I really tried to copy other people's pictures which took me nowhere, I got frustrated at myself that my pictures weren't as good and not close to the pictures I tried to copy. Until one day I just let that go and I found my own style and it was easier to take shots. Thats my advice for people who are starting up with VP. You can obviously draw inspiration from others works but don't copy. Make your own style and stick with it. After all you are doing it for yourself. It really is practice makes perfect."

FoxPourple
Wuchang: Fallen Feathers

wistfulembrace
the Last of Us: Part II

horace0816
Kingdom Come Deliverance 2

delboy_vp
Alan Wake 2

alphasuni
Cyberpunk 2077

alphasuni
Cyberpunk 2077

keepyourinnerlight
Death Stranding 2