

# THE PHOTOMODE

COVER BY ALPHASUNI

E - M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 38



**Q&A  
WITH  
WARHORSE  
STUDIOS**  
KINGDOM COME DELIVERANCE 2

**COMMUNITY THEMES  
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**THE ONES WHO  
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# THE PHOTOMODE

E - MAGAZINE # 38

The Virtual Photography Community has been buzzing with activity across all social media platforms this spring. We've seen old VPs return and many new accounts have caught our attention. It's a pleasure to see the community growing closer together and interactions with studios becoming more frequent.

This issue highlights a personal favourite of mine - **Kingdom Come Deliverance II**, developed by **Warhorse Studio**. Inside you'll find a Q&A with Creative Director, **Prokop Jirsa**, together with your beautiful captures from the game. A warm thank you to **SirTobi** for helping us set up the interview.

Most of you have probably come across the stunning images captured by **Nimmu**. Her recent virtual photography guides sparked the idea to invite her as a contributing author. I'm certain that her guides will provide inspiration for both new and old photographers. Welcome on board Nimmu!

In this issue we present a new contents page to make it easier to navigate inside the magazine. Simply click the photo for the section you wish to view and it will take you to the right page.

Happy reading!

*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:thephotomode.com)

Instagram: @[thephotomode.tpm](https://www.instagram.com/thephotomode.tpm)

Twitter/X: @[thehotomode](https://twitter.com/thehotomode)

Bluesky: @[thephotomode.com](https://bsky.app/profile/thephotomode.com)

Youtube: @[TPM-ThePhotomode](https://www.youtube.com/TPM-ThePhotomode)

Website: [www.thephotomode.com](http://www.thephotomode.com)

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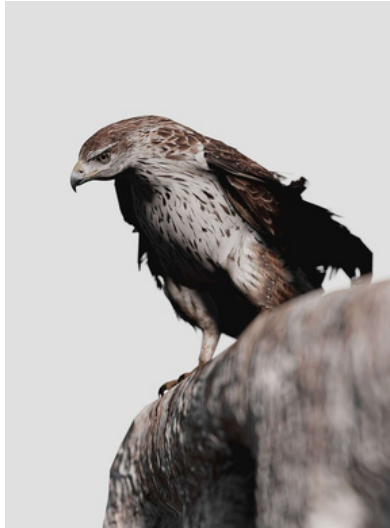


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INTERVIEW & COMMUNITY FEATURES



## KINGDOM COME DELIVERANCE II

COMMUNITY FEATURES & SPOTLIGHTS



## VP&ME THEONLYJESS

INTERVIEW



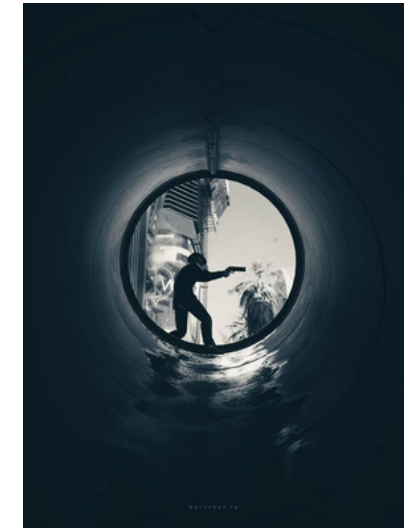
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# THE ONES WHO CAME BEFORE

## VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY

The Ones Who Came Before VP Community is hosted by [Aaron Young](#) from The AC Partnership Program. 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](http://THEONESWHOCAMEBEFORE.COM)





I always enjoy seeing and writing about Assassin's Creed Valhalla photography, it's been such a huge part of my life for so long now. I will never forget the sheer volume of captures that were shared upon the games launch. To this day it is still my favourite photo mode from the franchise.

This capture is quite striking and thought provoking. The minimalist approach really elevates these elements, as you are left contemplating what Eivor is doing. I get a real sense he is crossing the worlds to Valhalla, the void between being mortal and a God.

The white background further highlights this feeling and the reflection on the water resembling his past drifting away.

**Lonely Warrior**

VP Artist @inmostvp

ASSASSIN'S CREED VALHALLA



Assassin's Creed Shadows has so many wonderful locations that benefit from the seasons function. It allows us to experience the same place but with a different look. The winter season I feel brings out the best in the game.

I think this capture is one of my favourites from Shadows. I love the composition and the Torii gate leaning against the tree. The textures on the snow look extremely life like and the fog lingering in the air adds to the ambiance.

To me it feels like we are the foe lying in wait to ambush the unaware Shinobi. Naoe does look great riding her horse through the forest oblivious to the dangers that surround her.

**Ice Cold**

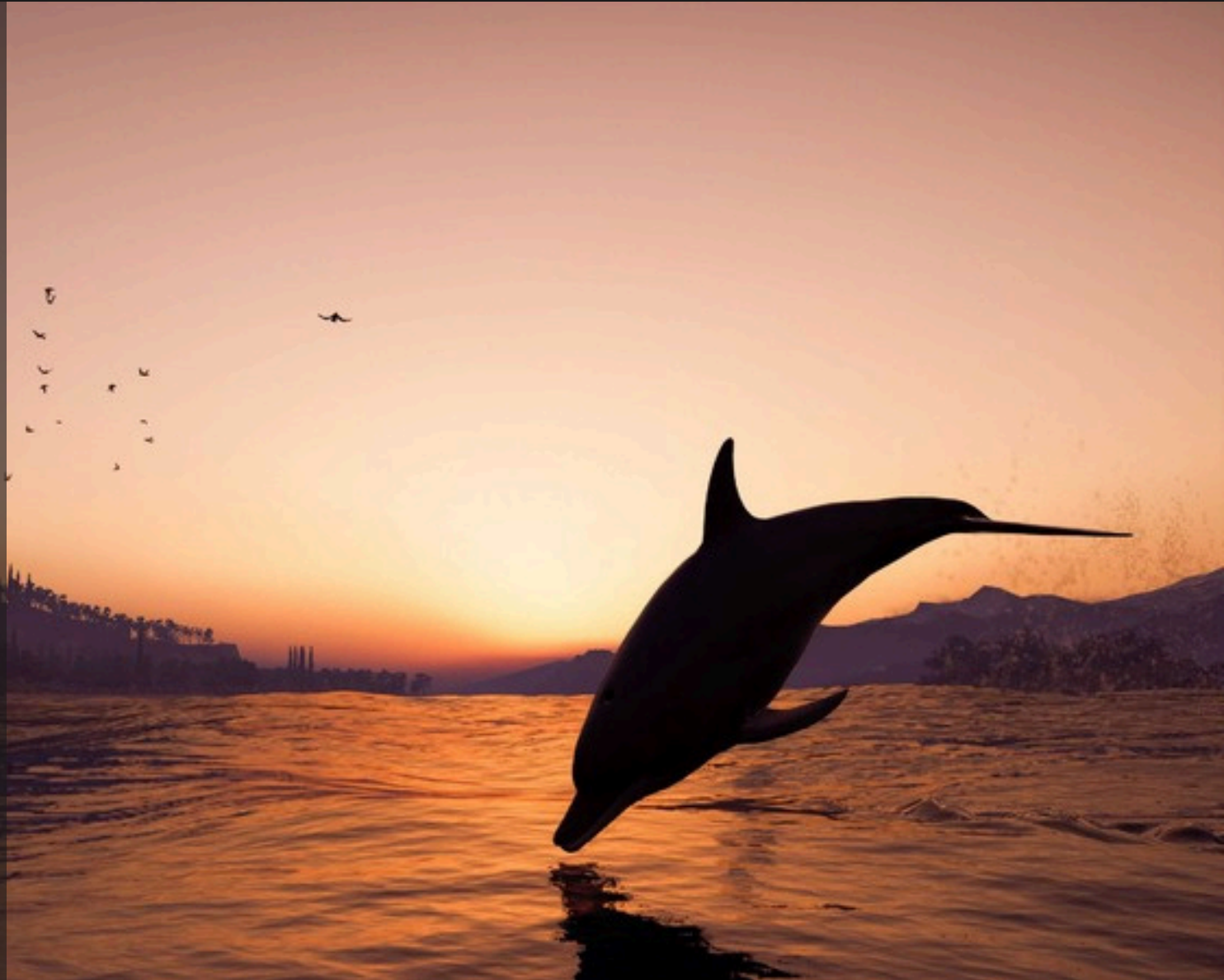
VP Artist @FrameCaptureVP  
ASSASSIN'S CREED SHADOWS

As we approach the summertime, I always reminisce to the pandemic and how Assassin's Creed Odyssey took me on holiday to Greece when the world stood still.

That is the beauty of this wonderful franchise that it can transport us to places we may never have the chance to visit.

This capture is all about the timing and Bryan has certainly aced it. The angle of the dolphin with the reflection on the water is stunning.

Additionally, you have the striking shadow work that elevates this photo to new heights. The gorgeous backdrop of a sunset finishing off this superb piece of virtual photography.



#### Diving In

VP Artist @2oongamer.bsky.social  
ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY



On The Lookout  
VP Artist @elenyae-vp  
ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS

ELENYAE



Eagle Claw  
VP Artist @charapof  
ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY



Kassandra  
VP Artist @AkillesDHero  
ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY



Strolling At Night  
VP Artist @thedreadwolfsheart  
ASSASSIN'S CREED MIRAGE



Beauty  
VP Artist @flibbleynova  
ASSASSIN'S CREED VALHALLA



Take the Leap  
VP Artist @capturedby.allister  
ASSASSIN'S CREED MIRAGE



THEONESWHOCAMEBEFORE



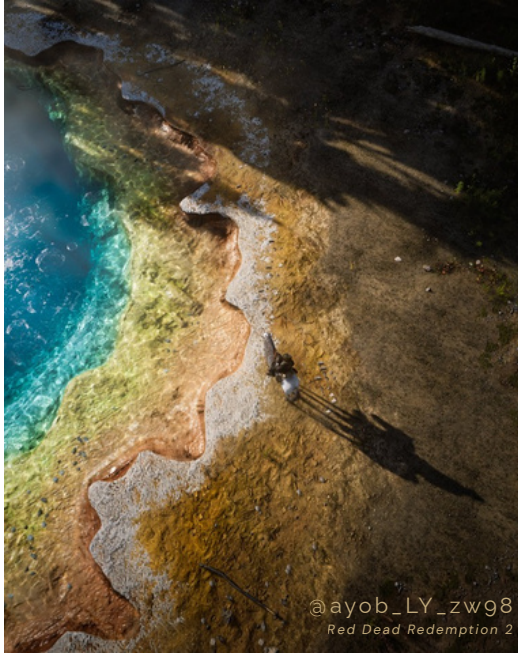
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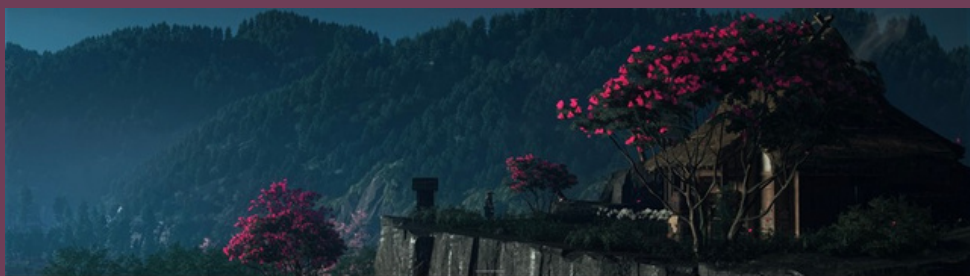
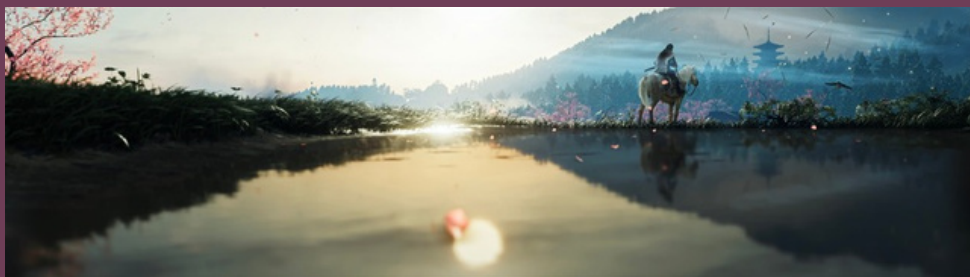
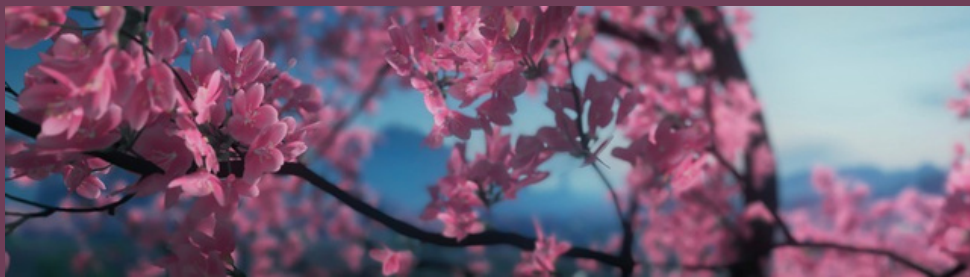


Photomode\_Raro  
*Ghost of Yotei*

# T P M N A T U R E







## THEME SPOTLIGHT

"Hello I'm Strand, a Virtual Photographer from the UAE. I love taking photos while playing games, especially death stranding!

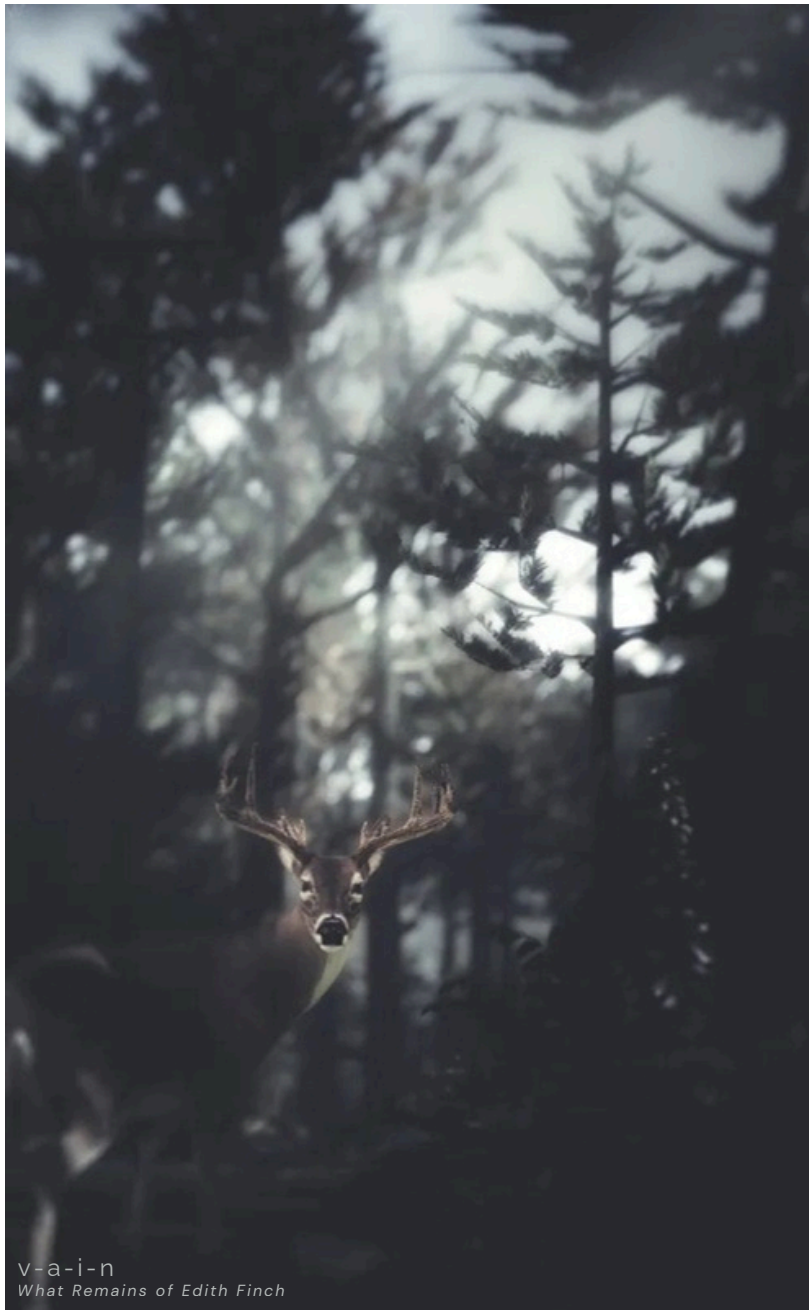
I have always loved the environment design in video games, and had been taking screenshots for years before I started posting on social media in May last year. Around that time, I also came across virtual photography on X/Twitter and felt inspired by other creators to start sharing my own work.

One day I shared a photo I'd taken in Death Stranding with a friend and jokingly asked if it was worth posting, and they encouraged me without hesitation, and I haven't looked back since. I've also had an amazing time creating and posting photos on a daily basis. It feels really refreshing, as every day I get to work on something new and creatively challenging which really helps to portray the beauty that I see in these games.

As for how I took this shot, it had been a while since I'd played Ghost of Yotei, and I really wanted to revisit it to explore the new photo mode improvements, take my time, and give the editing the attention it deserved. I also wanted to tie the shots into March's Nature theme for TPM, so it felt like the perfect excuse to jump back in.

This time I tried something a little different, capturing all of the photos in a 32:9 aspect ratio, which made composing each image a genuinely fun challenge. I also found myself inspired by macro photography a little bit, something you can really see in the cherry blossom shots. What I love about this game is how much freedom it gives you with the camera range and it opens the door to so much experimentation, and I think that really comes through in these images."

shotsbystrand  
*Ghost of Yotei*



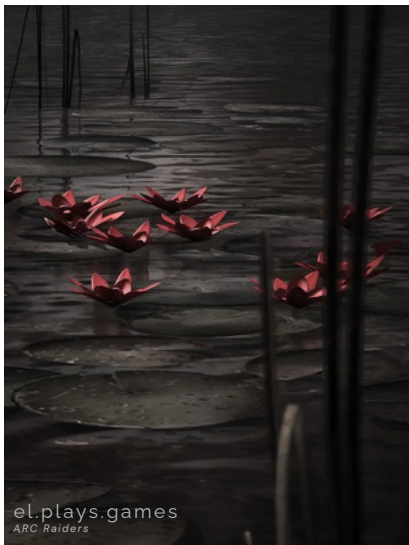
v-a-i-n  
*What Remains of Edith Finch*



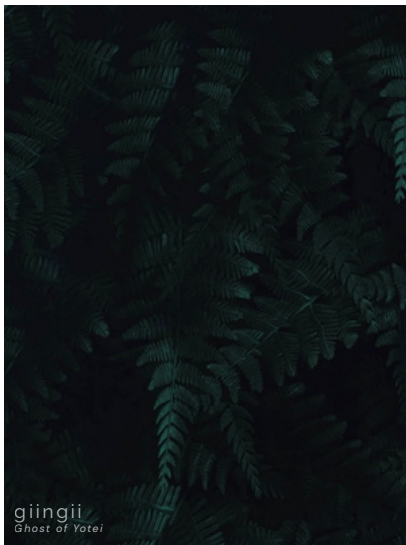
croftsnap  
*Lushfoil Photography Sim*



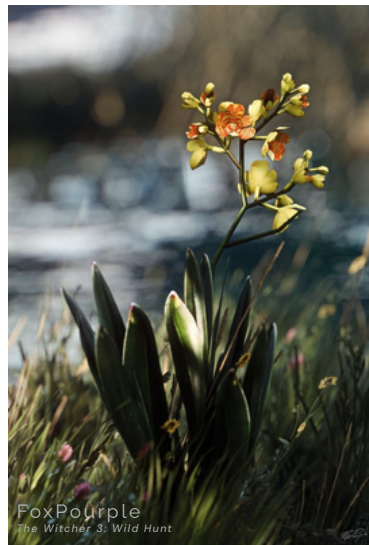
gamingq\_vp  
*Red Dead Redemption 2*



el.plays.games  
*ARC Raiders*



giingii  
*Ghost of Yotei*



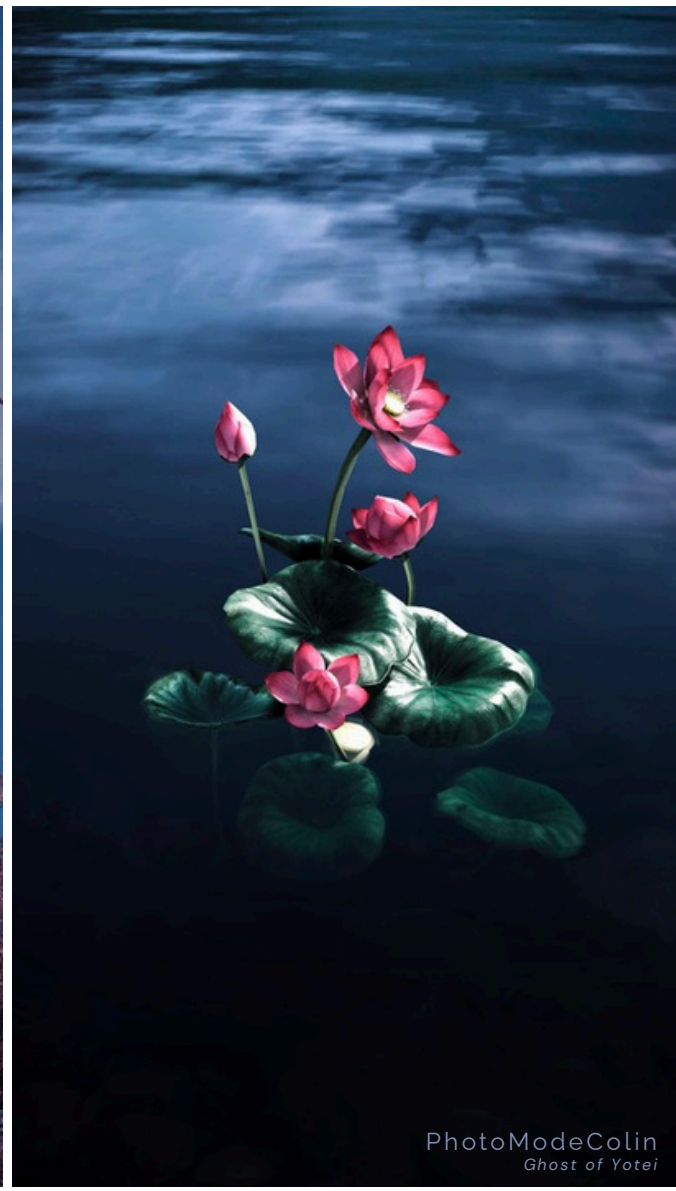
FoxPoPurple  
*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*



StefanieMcMaken  
*A Plague Tale: Requiem*



mnt13  
*Assassin's Creed Shadows*



PhotoModeColin  
*Ghost of Yotei*

"My name is Sarah and I am Commodore 64 old. I first discovered that you can take pictures in games when I was messing around in the menus of Horizon Zero Dawn on my PS4. I was flabbergasted when I discovered it. It was much later in 2020 that I discovered the virtual photography community. It was at this time when I was playing Assassin's Creed Odyssey on the PC, that I started to take pictures of everything during the main campaign. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I recall at one point having no idea how to even tilt the camera. I had to appeal to the more experienced VP's that I had met, notably Steffi (@amethystibiscu), to teach me those basics. By the time I got to the Atlantis DLC, I had learnt of the existence of external camera tools such as those by Frans Bouma and from there I was able to really experiment and grow. I became active on Twitter, was invited on YouTube streams and joined virtual photography community pages to assist sharing others' work.

I feel like I have settled on my final style of photographs, especially since discovering Lightroom and the popularity of editing photos. It allows you to make photographs truly your own. The style I have found myself settling on is often black and white, grainy, muted colours, negative space, and of course - frames and borders. Often these are not favoured by many, but they are a piece of me, and that is all that matters.



The photos featured today were during the Alheim section of God of War.

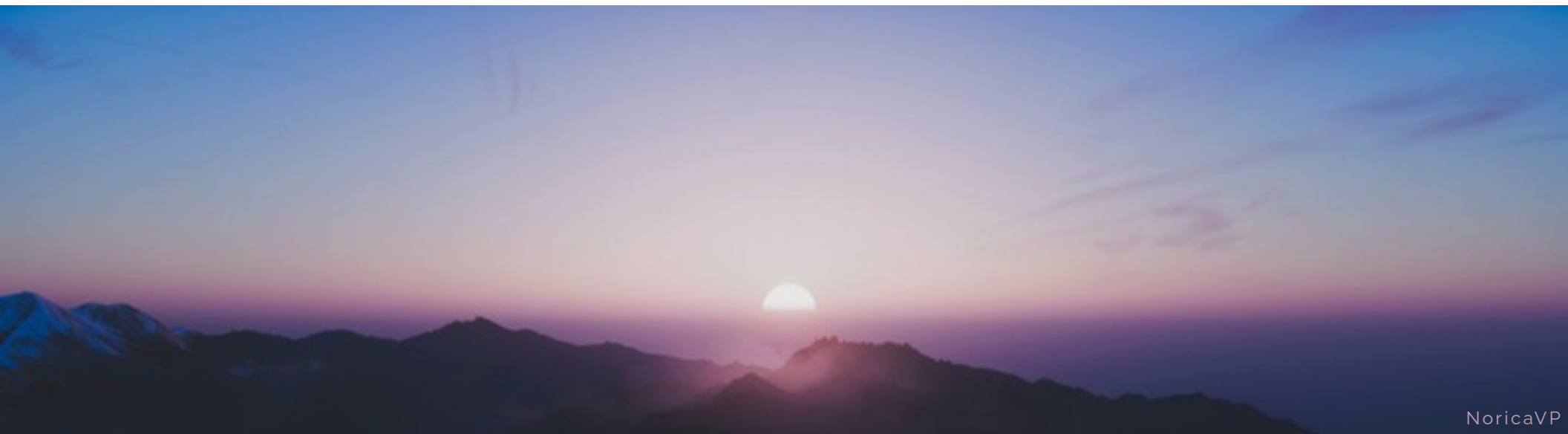
These are a prime example of the style I have settled on. The tendency is to make this area of the game highly saturated, to pop more, but I chose to do everything I mention above - mute them, add some grain to mute even more, and also to add a pretty border. It has been five years since I took these photos, so I cannot give too much insight into my thought process at the time other than what I have

already mentioned, but I do know that I wouldn't have done them any other way even if I retook them now.

I have had a long period of time where I have not been part of the VP community. In 2023 my husband became unwell with cancer. Gaming came to a halt. I went through a period of being really down and not enjoying any of my hobbies anymore. Then Death Stranding 2 released in 2025. I decided to play it, and it saved me, truly. Who knew building roads was such a serotonin boost!

I am currently relearning to enjoy games again, and I will soon get back into Virtual Photography, especially now there is such a good community on Bluesky.

But for now, I am just reposting all my old photos. It has been very enjoyable to reshare these, and I am very proud of them and hope to continue my VP journey for the foreseeable future."





# Q&A WITH WARHORSE STUDIOS



@WarhorseStudios  
@KingdomComeRPG



@warhorsestudios  
@kingdomcomerpg



[Warhorse Studios](#)

[Kingdom Come Deliverance II](#)

Kingdom Come: Deliverance II surprised the gaming community with its authentic open-world, captivating story and challenging gameplay. Seven months after release the game got an updated photo mode.

In this Q&A [Prokop Jirsa](#), Creative Director at Warhorse Studios and Lead Game Designer of KCD: II, tell us about their thoughts behind and challenges involved in implementing the photo mode.



The game launched in February with an in-game camera, but in September you updated it into a full photo mode.

Was it always planned, and what inspired the implementation?

**Prokop Jirsa:** Yes, it was always something we wanted to do. At launch, our priority was delivering the core game experience, so the simpler camera was the right first step. It gave players a way to capture moments immediately.

What really pushed the full photo mode forward was the community. We saw players already using the camera creatively and sharing great shots. That showed us there was real interest, so we wanted to give them better tools.



The photo mode in KCD: II feels quite different from many other games. What went into designing it, and how did you ensure the features and UI matched the rest of the game?

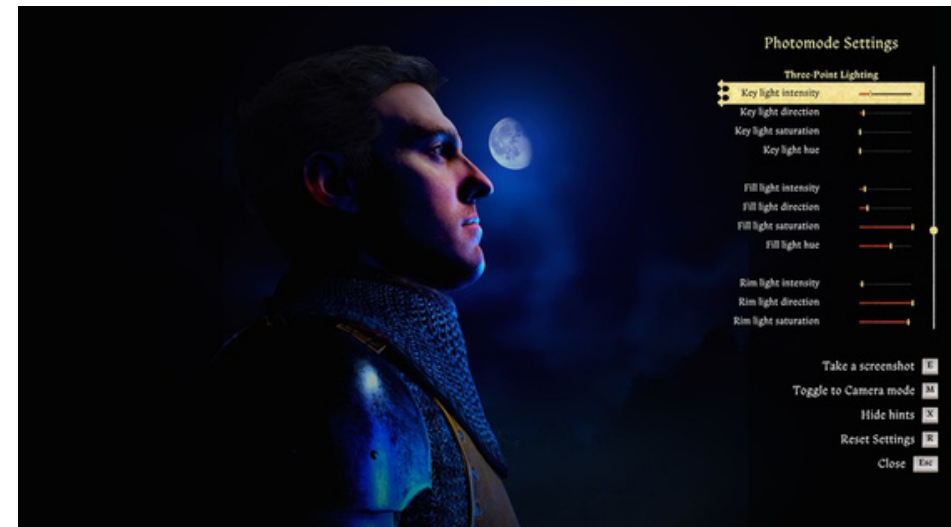
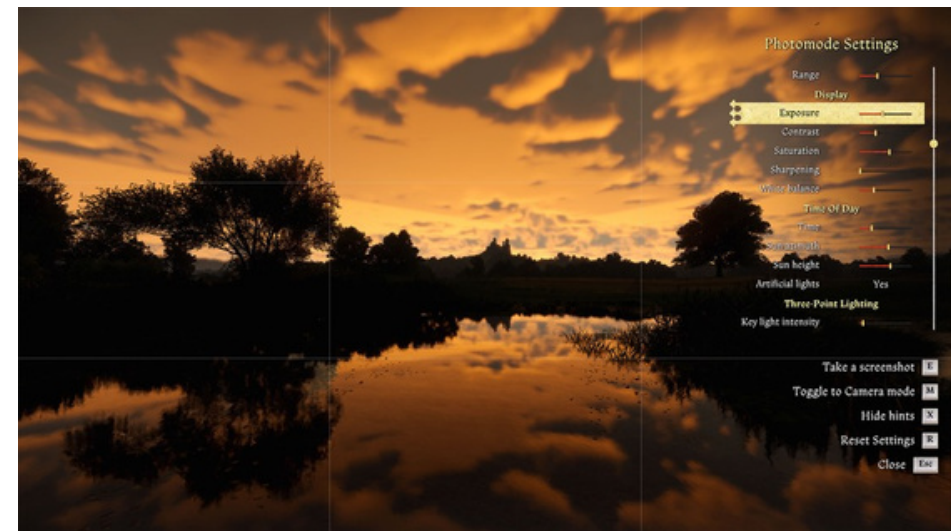
We wanted it to feel like part of the game, not a separate tool. The focus was on clarity, ease of use, and features that help composition without overwhelming players.

For the UI, we tried to stay consistent with the game's overall style. Even small details like layout, typography, and presentation matter if you want the feature to feel natural.

What technical or creative challenges did you face? Were there things you wanted to add but didn't?

Photo mode touches many systems at once, like camera controls, lighting, UI, and performance, so it is more complex than it may seem.

One thing we wanted to add was more character expression features, such as custom poses and facial animations. We discussed it and would have loved to include it, but production time is always limited, and we preferred to focus on delivering a polished and stable feature set first. Creatively, the challenge was also knowing when to stop. It is easy to keep adding ideas, but too many options can hurt usability.



Henry commenting when you close photo mode feels like a clever way to prevent using it as a camera cheat. What were your thoughts around breaking the fourth wall like that?

This was our solution to the cheating question. Internally, we had many discussions about how comfortable we were with players using photo mode to look around corners, peek through doors, or scout enemies safely.

In the end, we came up with a system where Henry comments when you exit photo mode, and that line is heard in the world by nearby NPCs or enemies. So, using it carelessly can create consequences. We liked that solution because it feels playful, but it also stays connected to the game world.

You give players a lot of freedom through mods and photo mode. How do you balance creative freedom with the game's integrity?

For me, those things support each other. Our job is to build a strong core experience first. Once that exists, giving players tools to create and experiment can add a lot of life around it.

The original experience stays intact, while the community gets new ways to engage with it.

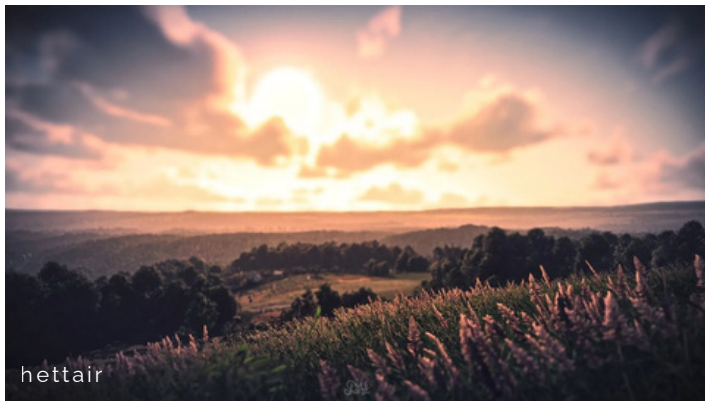


Even with two massive maps, the landscape never feels repetitive. What were the key elements in creating such an authentic world?

A big part of it is that almost everything is handmade. We invested a lot of time and care into shaping locations individually instead of relying on repetition.

We try to build places with purpose. Why is a road there, who lives in a house, why is a field planted there, why is a camp abandoned. When places answer those questions, they feel believable.

Small details matter too. Mud, tools, damage, clutter, lighting, and weather all help bring the world to life.





Do you have a favorite place in the game you'd like to see more photos of? Any standout photos from players so far?

Trosky Castle is always one of my favorites. I like taking a horse, putting on a good set of armor, and taking a picture with Trosky Castle in the background. It has a very iconic silhouette and always looks great. My favorite community photos are usually the ones that tell a story in one frame, whether that is beauty, comedy, chaos, or emotion.

Humour seems central both to the game and how you communicate with players. Why is it so important?

Because humor is human. History was full of serious moments, but also jokes, awkwardness, and absurd situations.

It also creates contrast. If everything is serious all the time, dramatic moments lose impact.

Were you familiar with virtual photography before, and would you carry photo mode into future projects?

Yes, definitely. I was already familiar with virtual photography before, and creators like Frans Bouma were a real inspiration.

Players often show us our own world from angles or perspectives we never expected, and that is valuable.

So yes, I think photo modes have a strong future. Giving players tools to observe, create, and share their experience can only deepen their connection to the game.





\_GenieCrazy\_

K I N G D O M   C O M E   D E L I V E R A N C E   I I



effy.vp



cyriellevp



alenniavp



"It must've been somewhere in the year 2012 when a friend of mine told me about this crazy game idea of some Czech devs, that's gonna be set in medieval Bohemia, aiming at realism, historical accuracy and intense story telling, with motion captured real sword fighting and such.

It was then in 2014, that I joined the crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter for said game and became one of the 38,784 backers. In 2015, I was allowed - as a backer - to play the closed Beta for this game (I still got screenshots from that time!), where the player got dropped into a small Bohemian village, we were allowed to use the interesting alchemy system to craft a potion against diarrhea and explore the dense and beautiful forest nearby. That game was Kingdom Come Deliverance.

The moment I played the Beta and finally, at the release of the game in 2018, it's been my comfort game ever since. I never uninstalled it, it's always the first game I installed on a new PC and if I didn't know what to do or what to play, I simply returned to Bohemia, picked some mushrooms, flowers and enjoyed a stroll on the back of my trusty horse Pebbles.

Then, in February of 2025, my one and only comfort game suddenly got replaced. By its successor: Kingdom Come Deliverance II.

KCD is my game. Simple as that. Not just because I have a Master degree in culture history and ethnology so naturally this makes my heart beat faster.



Not just because I have roots in Bohemia and - from my fathers side - actually descend from some Bohemian noble family.

I think it can be said that, as a whole, KCD is deeply nestled into my heart. For its story. Characters. Gameplay. Visuals. For the feeling it creates.

Being able to take pictures of this game is my personal love letter to Warhorse Studios. In the beginning, when the PM for KCD2 was much more simple, I relied on Nvidia Ansel for my shots.

I love portraits more than anything else and it became my personal challenge to tickle some interesting expressions out of Henry, instead of the good ol' empty stare into the sky, that he likes to show you when you open the PM.

I don't like to edit much. Maybe a bit of brightness or contrast. I did a few experiments later with the options the upgraded PM provided but generally speaking, I prefer the natural beauty of the game."

netrunner1073



axelis\_online



nikki.kaya



glendylucast



reddeadgem



THEME  
SPOTLIGHT

"My journey with KCD started completely by accident. In February, when the game was supposed to be released, I didn't want to buy it at all because I thought it was too hard to play and I would uninstall it very quickly anyway. The day the game was released, I got some mysterious impulse and without thinking, I bought and installed it. And I have to say, it was probably the best idea of the past year.

I finally found out for myself how special a game series KCD actually is. The game completely absorbs you and doesn't let you go. Yes, the first 30 hours were quite painful, but if you decide to invest your time in it, then it all pays off.

The second game captivated me in several ways - the music, atmosphere, environment, characters and an incredible patriotic feeling. Why? Because I come from the Czech Republic, where the game takes place. So I already know more or less the places where you as Henry go in the game.

I visited a lot of them just last year (Rattay, Trosky, Maleshov, Kuttentberg).

KCD II has made our country a very good name in the world and many tourists have started coming to us thanks to it. It is also very good that we show the history of our country in the game, because I think that a lot of interesting things have happened in our past.

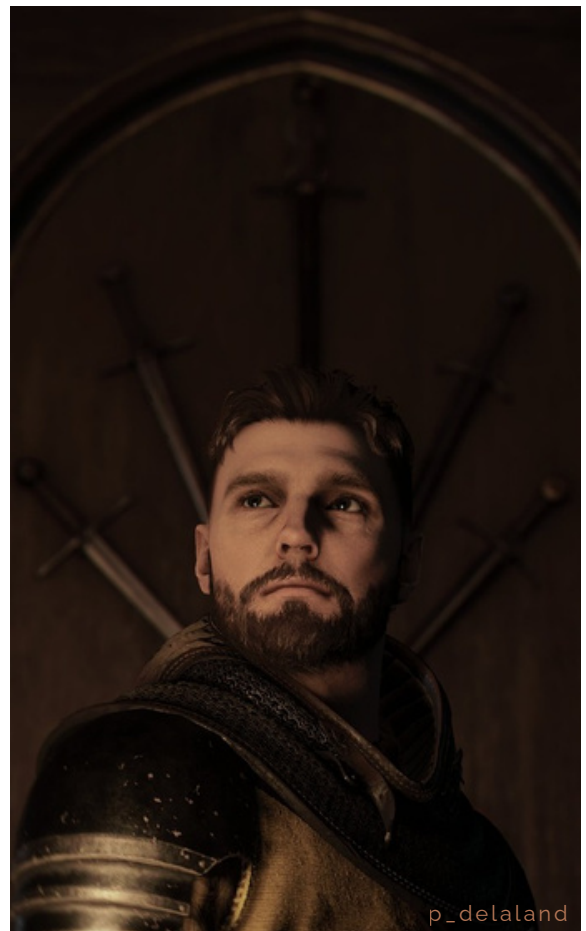
As for taking pictures in the game, I originally used some mods because the official photomode was not available. It is great that the developers then added this tool to the game because the players wanted it. In KCD II, I mainly like to take pictures of nature, because it is incredibly realistic (to the point that when I go for a walk around my village, it looks almost identical).

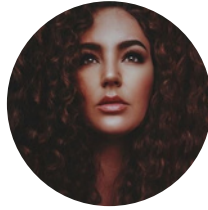
However, I also focus on architecture and try to take some portraits. In short, a little bit of everything. My favorite location is the entire area around Trosky Castle - this castle is unfortunately just a ruin today, but that hasn't taken away from its charm.

I still have two expansions left to finish for this game, so I expect to go on another interesting adventure and take some interesting photos along the way."

alis\_jansendottir







X @theonlyjess\_vp    Instagram @\_theonlyjess\_

# VP&ME WITH THE ONLY JESS

Jess's emotional portraits and supportive nature have been well-known in the VP community for years. On the following pages, we'll learn more about how virtual photography has helped her through difficult times and what the community means to her.



Could you tell us a little about yourself and your VP journey? How did it start and have there been any particularly memorable moments along the way?

My name is Jess and I live in Georgia, USA. I grew up playing games on the Sega, Nintendo, Playstation and Xbox until I stopped gaming for quite some time. I came back to gaming when Red Dead Redemption 2 came out, started snapping screenshots and using Arthur's little in-game camera immediately.

I've always loved photography, I wanted to do that for a living for a long time but it never happened. Some of my favorite moments from starting VP are when I would take photos of my friends on Red Dead Online and edit them - they were always so hyped to see what I came up with. From there, my love for gaming was rekindled and I continued onto other games, still snapping photos constantly.

Around 2020, I found the Red Dead Redemption Photography Society group on Facebook and realized I wasn't the only one doing this! I was so excited to see other's shots and share mine. Since then, I became an admin in that group and one other VP group, created an Instagram just for it and subsequently a Twitter account. I was so amazed at how large this community is and overall how kind and welcoming the people in it are.





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

Oh man, this is such a hard question to answer. I think one of my favorite games to capture would still be RDR2. Just the photo mode existing now is something that makes me so happy because it wasn't there for so long. It's not the best photo mode, there are so many things I would change about it but it is simple and easy to use. Any time I go back to that game, I can't help but feel like home and instantly start snapping.

What does virtual photography mean to you?

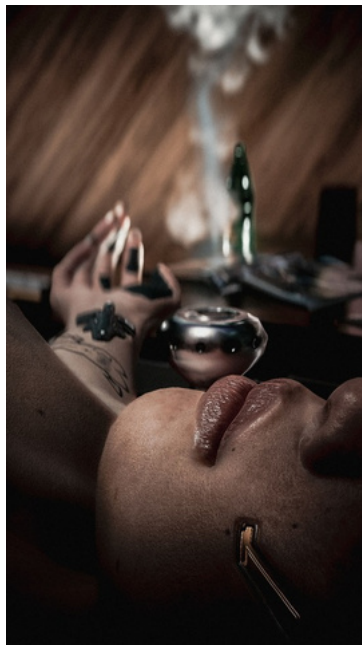
Virtual photography for me means being able to continue my love for photography without having to go too far out in the real world. In 2017, I was diagnosed with NET cancer and had many surgeries, procedures, infections, hospitalizations, etc. which have left me in a lot of pain. So going on big hikes and things to get to the amazing views I'd love to capture are just not in the cards for me. But I'm able to capture, not only incredible views, but totally different worlds. I still do photography in real life but nothing like I used to unfortunately.

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

I'm a 100% spontaneous VPer. I try to plan things and they never come out in a way I'm happy with. Being on console and seeing what people can do on PC, I think sometimes I set myself up for failure because I think I can do something that is impossible on console. I do wonder if I would be able to change to more planned photos if I had a PC or if it would still just not be me.

I am not sure if I have a preferred style, I think my style kind of changes with the game I'm playing. I adore people that have a very specific style like Evey (@wistfulembrace) and Malin (@playpausephoto). No matter what game they shoot, you can always tell they're their photos. I would love to have that kind of recognizable style but I just don't.





You often post your photos along with a thoughtful or poetic quote or phrase. Could you tell us a little about that? Do the words inspire the photo or vice versa?

When I pick a quote for a shot, it's because I'm wanting to show the emotion I feel behind the shot. I feel an emotion behind pretty much every shot and I guess I feel like I want to make sure others understand why I took that photo.

I also use a lot of music lyrics for captions - I'm usually having a song that comes into my mind while I'm post-editing the photo. I think I'm just an extremely emotional person, for better or worse.

You're known for using the 9:16 format for most of your photos. What is it you like about it?

I started using 9:16 a lot more often all because it shows up on the phone better. I do all my editing on my phone so it's nice to have it take up the screen and then when I post it, I like that it fits the screen a bit better than landscape 16:9 does. I do still really enjoy landscape and cinematic cropped photos a lot but don't post them as often anymore sadly.

Who and what has been your biggest influence and inspiration when it comes to VP?

I'm not sure if this sounds weird but I really do this for me. It's honestly something that has been there for me in my worst times. I'm inspired by so many people in the community - seeing them push through the algorithm issues and all of the things that come with social media and still posting because they actually enjoy it - that is so inspiring.

The numbers are so hard to take your focus off of. I know in the beginning, I always felt some kind of way about the numbers but once I just put that outside of my mind, I can really enjoy the craft itself.

I've made so many friends from this community and that warms my heart more than anything. Having friends as an adult is really hard, especially as an introvert. So having people to talk to and share with here means the world to me.





What advice would you give to someone just starting out in virtual photography?

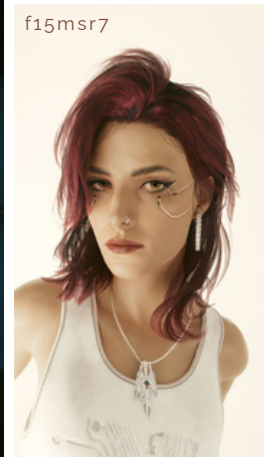
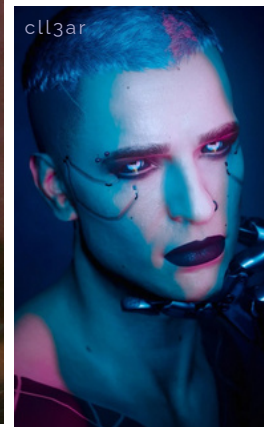
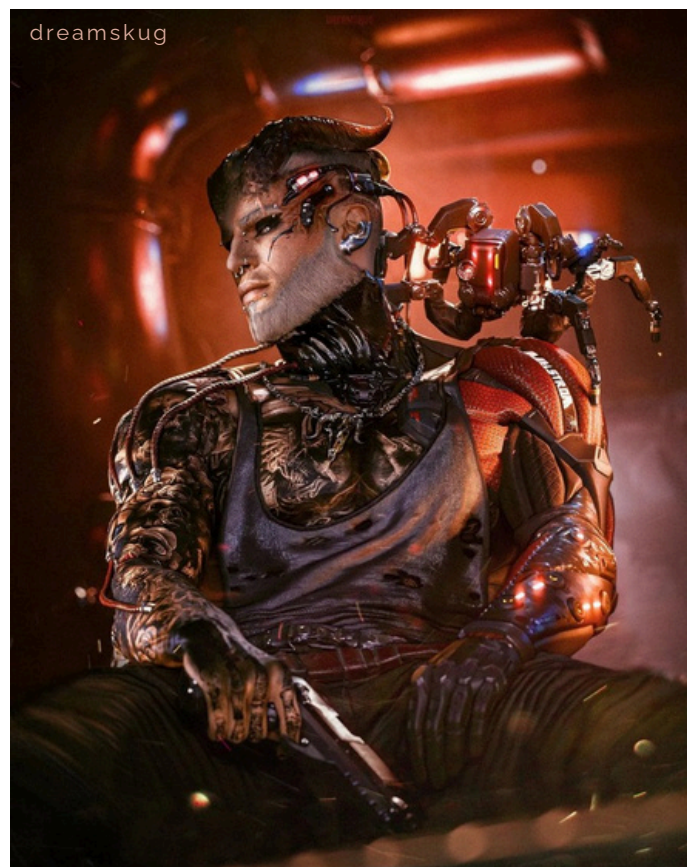
The most important thing I would tell them is, numbers do not matter. If you're doing it for likes, I would hope you would rethink doing it at all. I would also tell them, you are going to grow and change so much over time. Especially if you're new to photography as a whole, you are going to learn so many things from the people in this community and you will see how much your photos evolve and become more eye-catching.

Someone that I remember coming to the Facebook groups is Erin (@rOgues\_frOntier) - she has grown so much and watching her grow and her photos change into what they are today has been an absolute joy. So to anyone starting virtual photography: Just don't give up.



obsessedwhyyes  
*Baldur's Gate 3*

# T P M P E O P L E





scud.photos  
Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora



AlexKonstantin  
Senua's Saga: Hellblade II



thefrostysm  
Fortnite



mimihaa  
A Plague Tale: Requiem



crabbyswitch  
Silent Hill f



edwardframes  
Cyberpunk 2077



vinnies\_vp  
Red Dead Redemption 2

## THEME SPOTLIGHT

"I've completely fallen in love with the world of Horizon, and have dedicated countless hours exploring the beauty and storytelling of this game through photo mode. It was my first real step into virtual photography, which has quickly become a great creative outlet for me.

One of my favorite aspects of Horizon is how vibrant and alive the settlements feel. Lately, I've been enjoying going around the settlements to try and capture candid moments between NPCs - something that felt fitting for the #TPMPeople NPC weeks.

With this particular shot, I wanted to create a sense of intimacy - placing the viewers in the grass beside these characters, as if quietly observing a shared moment between two friends."

thyminee

*Horizon Forbidden West*

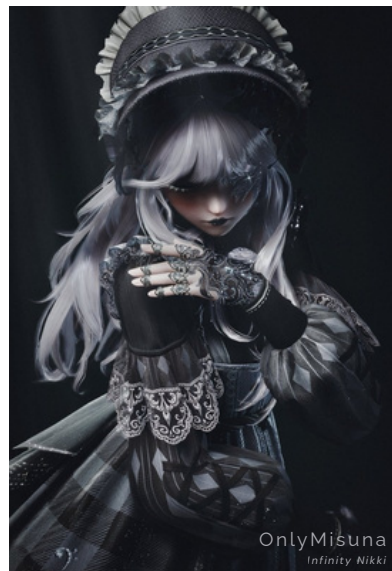




missbleachy  
*Dragon Age: The Veilguard*



vp.ingutenberg  
*Stellar Blade*



OnlyMisuna  
*Infinity Nikki*



It\_Hann  
*Death Stranding*



jens-nb  
*The Last of Us Part II*



frusu.vp  
*Red Dead Redemption 2*



sunny\_msc7  
*GTA: San Andreas*



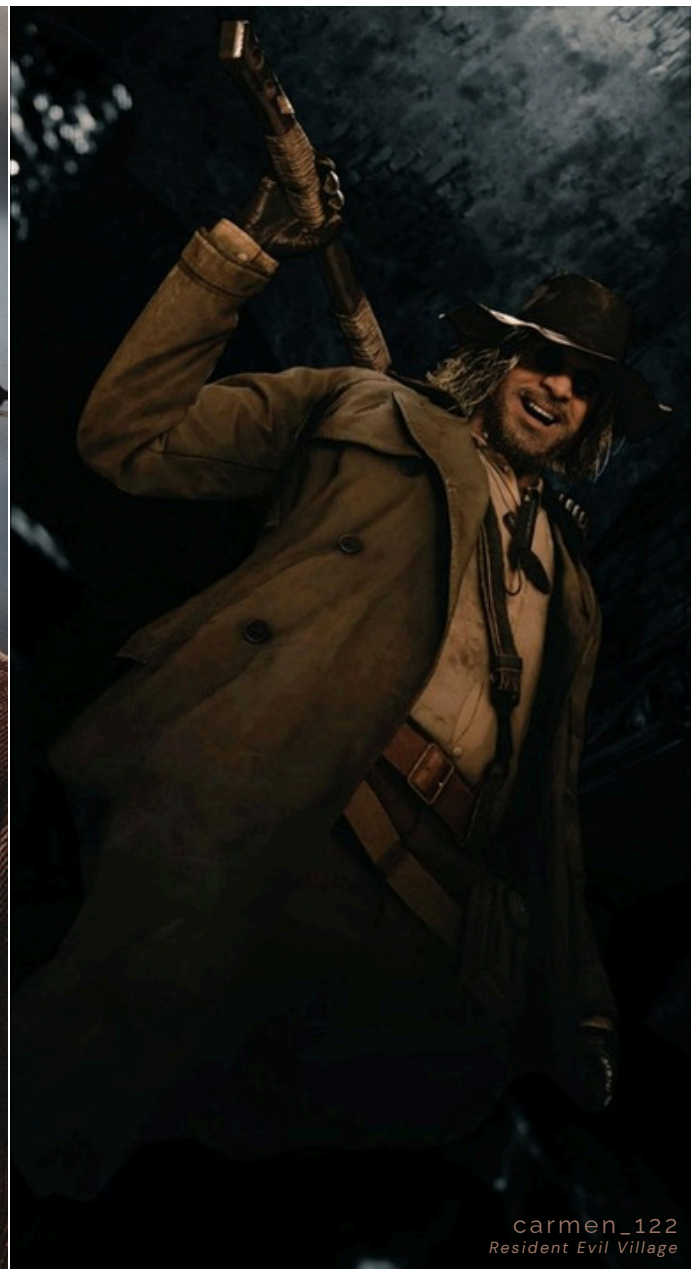
INMOSTvp  
*Spider-Man 2*



photomodenojoyer  
*The Last of Us Part II*



reephto  
*Red Dead Redemption 2*



carmen\_122  
*Resident Evil Village*



## THEME SPOTLIGHT

"I'm Anne from Finland. I'm a relatively new virtual photographer. My first two games where I tried VP were Alan Wake 2 and Control - and I still take photos of these beautiful games almost everyday.

The VP- and Remedy communities are very nice and supportive. I've met wonderful people through this hobby.

I don't have any favourite photography genre or style, it's nice to try different things. But if I see some interesting detail in game, I have to take a shot of it.

Some of my favourite photos I've taken, are at least partly accidental. That's when something unexpected happens in game just when I'm pausing the game to take a shot.

I'm very honored and grateful for the feature of my photos here in The Photo Mode e-mag. The featured photos are from Alan Wake 2. I took these with portrait light, in very dark areas. I hope you enjoy them!"

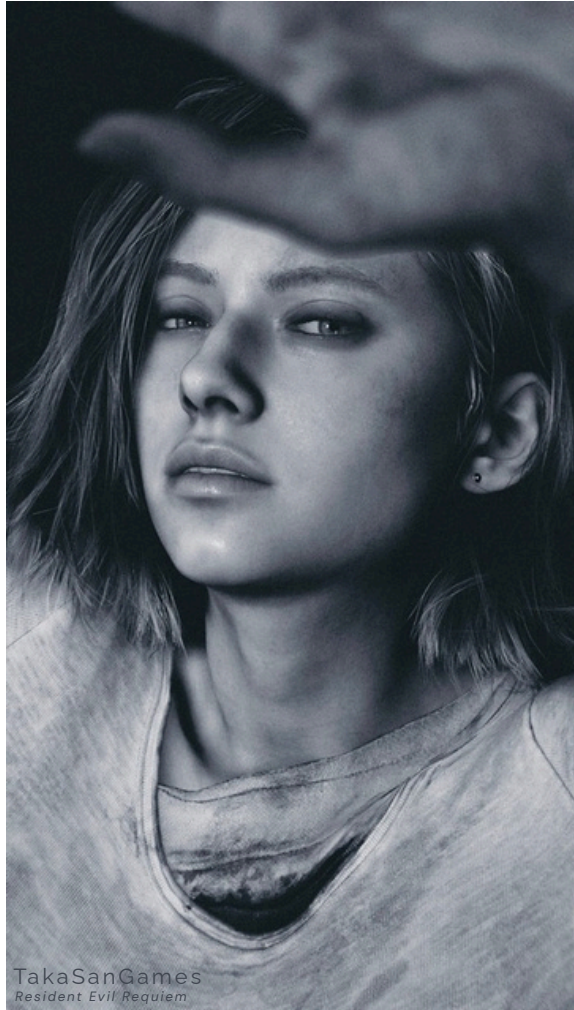
LadyLasol78  
*Alan Wake 2*



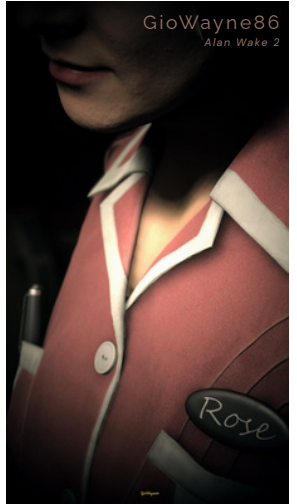
smokeymonstrvp  
*Red Dead Redemption 2*



feltiik  
*Control*



TakaSanGames  
*Resident Evil Requiem*



GioWayne86  
*Alan Wake 2*



halfbloodvince  
*Star Wars Outlaws*



floz.vp  
*Spider-Man 2*



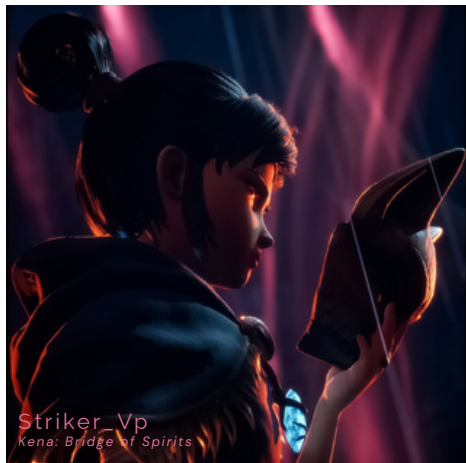
Game\_ZPhoto  
*Resident Evil Requiem*



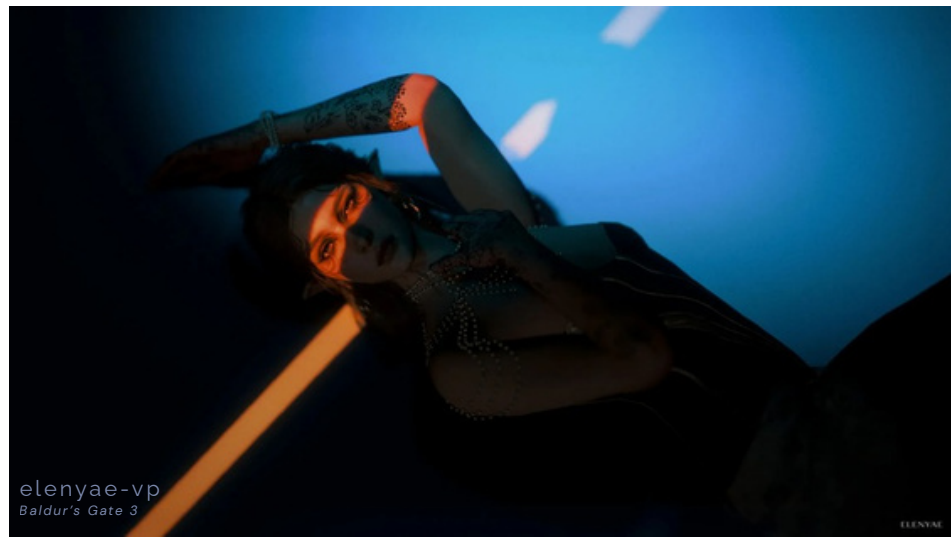
ma-moonshadow  
*Star Wars Jedi: Survivor*



thoraxtheimpaler  
*Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*



Striker\_Vp  
*Kena: Bridge of Spirits*



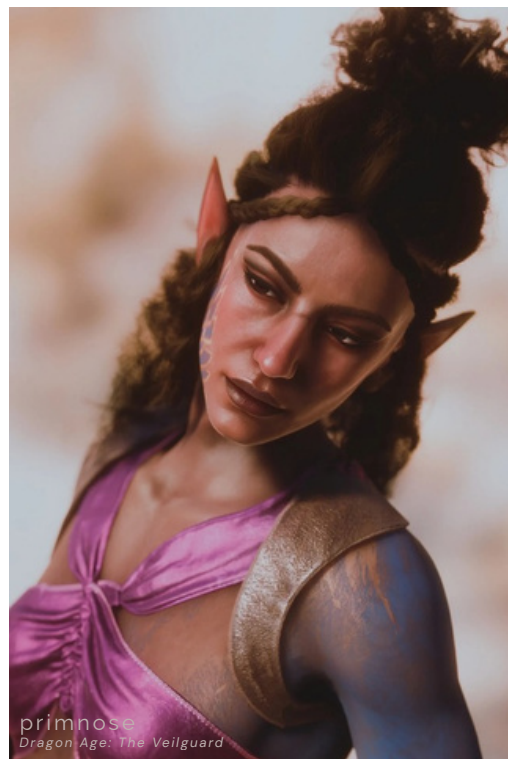
elenyae-vp  
*Baldur's Gate 3*



spideroftsushima  
*Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order*



gh\_holy\_mash  
*Ninja Gaiden 4*



primnose  
*Dragon Age: The Veilguard*



\_GenieCrazy\_  
*Senua's Saga: Hellblade II*

A GUIDE by Nimmu



@nimmu.bsky.social



@niinakaniin.vp

THROUGH THE VIRTUAL LENS

# PORTRAIT LIGHTING



These guides explore the fundamentals of photography and how they can be translated into virtual photography through in-game photo modes.

Nimmu is a virtual photographer with a background in media and visual expression. Through these guides, she hopes to encourage curiosity, experimentation, and personal expression in virtual photography.

## FACE THE LIGHT: THE ART AND IMPORTANCE OF PORTRAIT LIGHTING

When photographing characters in video games, lighting helps define how we see them. Soft light can make a portrait feel calm or intimate, while strong shadows can create tension, mystery, or drama. Even small changes in the direction of light can completely change the feeling of an image.

In virtual photography, we have the unique ability to control and study light in ways that are sometimes difficult in real-world photography. With control over time of day, weather, and camera angle, you can shape light intentionally to guide the viewer's attention and create atmosphere. Depending on the game's photo mode and available tools, it becomes possible to experiment with both direct and ambient light in creative ways.

Understanding a few classic lighting setups gives you a strong foundation, but they are not rules to follow strictly: they are tools you can adapt, combine, or break to suit your vision.

Let's take a look at four classic portrait lighting setups next: how to create them using a single light source, and how that lighting changes the mood of the portrait, using the photo mode and lighting tools in Clair Obscur: Expedition 33 (by Sandfall Interactive, Kepler Interactive).





## SPLIT LIGHTING

One side is fully lit, while the other half remains in shadow, creating a split. Side lighting is another name for this lighting style. This setup is very dramatic and bold: it is often used to create tension and mystery.

### HOW TO CREATE IT

Place the light source directly to the side of your subject (around 90°). Depending on the intensity of the light, the effect can be softer, revealing more detail on the shadow side of the face, or more dramatic with stronger contrast.



## BUTTERFLY LIGHTING

Butterfly lighting is recognizable by the butterfly-shaped shadow beneath the nose. This lighting setup gives a soft, flattering look, and is often used for balanced portraits. This lighting style is also known as Paramount lighting, as it was widely used for celebrity portraits during Hollywood's Golden Age.

### HOW TO CREATE IT

Place the light source directly in front and slightly above the face. Adjust the intensity of light as needed. To soften the shadows under the chin, you can add a second light in photo mode.

## REMBRANDT LIGHTING

Rembrandt lighting is named after the Dutch painter Rembrandt, who frequently used this style of lighting in his paintings. A small inverted triangle of light appears on the shadow side of the face, just under the eye. Traditionally, the triangle should be no longer than the nose and no wider than the eye, although slight variations can naturally occur depending on the angle and facial features. This lighting setup creates a moody, painterly look, with strong depth and contrast.

### HOW TO CREATE IT

Position your light source at an angle above and to the side of your subject. Adjust until a triangle of light forms on the darker side of the face. The triangle of light can appear either sharp and defined or soft and subtle.

## LOOP LIGHTING

A small shadow from the nose falls slightly to the side, forming a “loop” shape. The nose shadow and cheek shadow do not touch, creating an open loop. This style is often considered universally flattering because it adds natural definition to the nose and jawline through subtle shadows.

### HOW TO CREATE IT

Position the light slightly to the side and above the subject: this lighting style is less extreme than Rembrandt. The intensity of the light, as well as the distance of the light source, affects the amount of contrast in the shadows.



## STUDYING LIGHT & GETTING CREATIVE

### LEARN TO SEE THE LIGHT

Understanding lighting is about learning to see how light behaves. Depending on the game and photo mode, you can experiment a lot:

- Change the time of the day to observe how the lighting shifts.
- Rotate your subject and camera to see how shadows move.
- Test different weather conditions for softer or harsher light.
- Try turning on a black and white filter in photo mode: this removes color distractions and helps you focus on light and shadow values.

### STUDY REAL REFERENCES

You can learn a lot by observing:

- Look for catchlights in your eyes. They reveal the position, size, and intensity of the light source.
- Notice reflections on skin, armor, or fabric.
- Pay attention to how shadows fall across the face.

### PLAY WITH LIGHT

Knowing some lighting setups helps, but remember to experiment. Combine different lights as you like. This is all about what you want to express about the character. You're the painter, the photo mode camera is your tool, and light and shadow are your paint.





CosmosThief  
*Starfield*

# T H E P H O T O M O D E



Raider\_Warrior  
Lushfoil



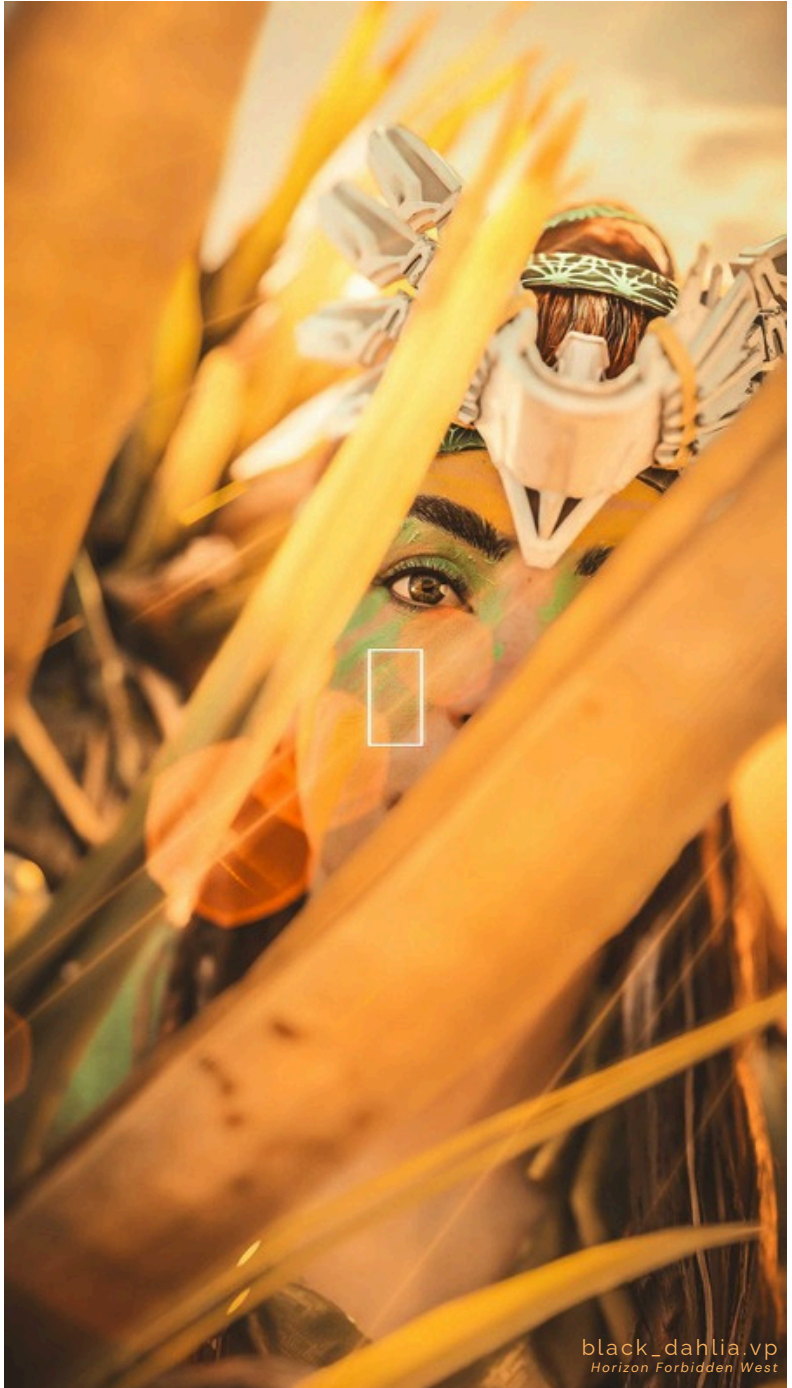
opticsshatter  
Assasin's Creed Shadows



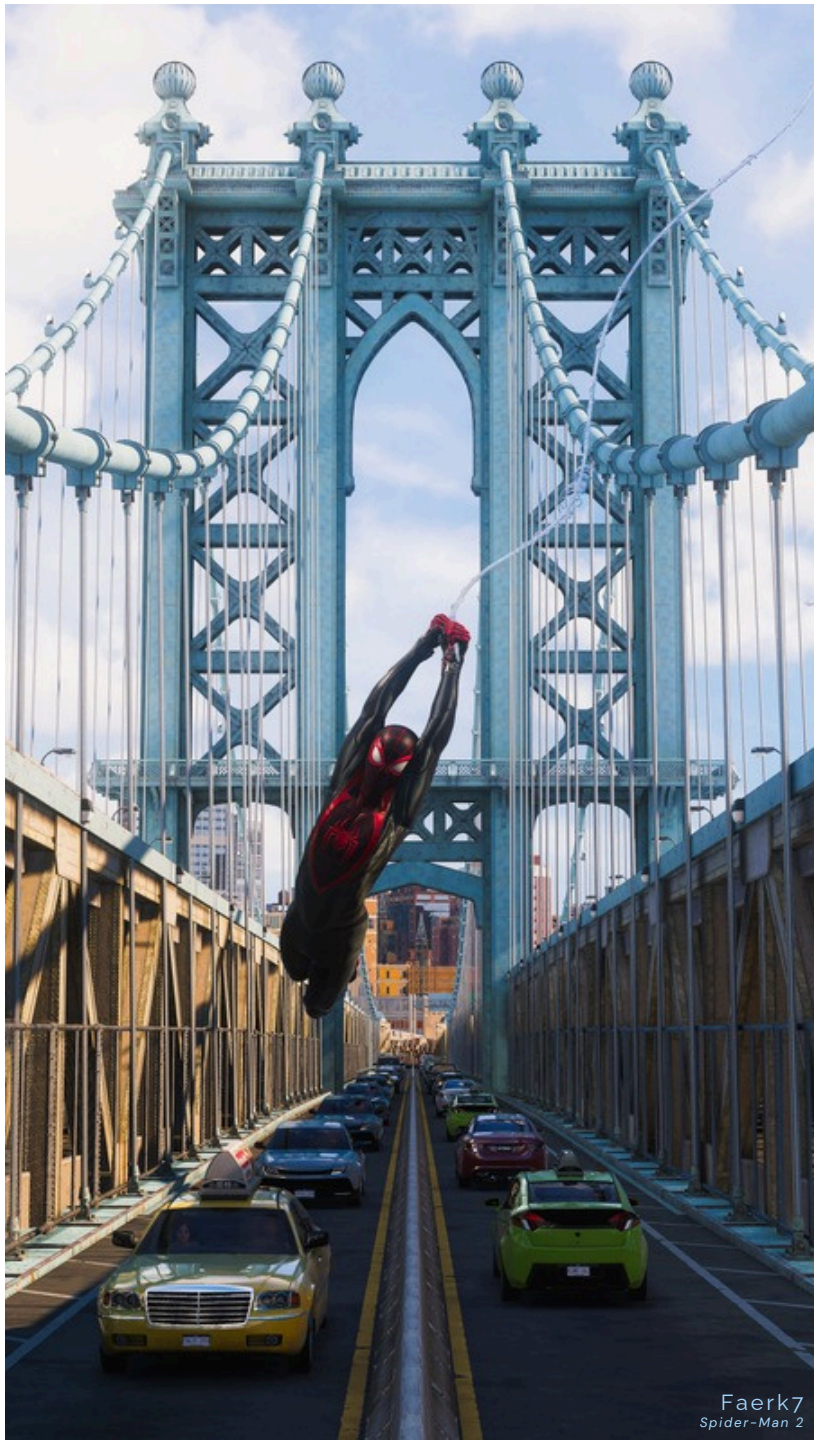
secondcapture  
Where Winds Meet



revendi\_vp  
Starfield



black\_dahlia\_vp  
Horizon Forbidden West



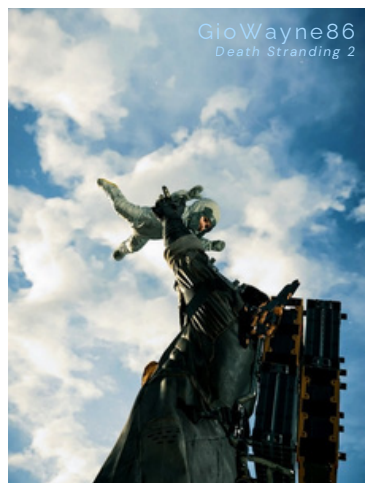
Faerk7  
Spider-Man 2



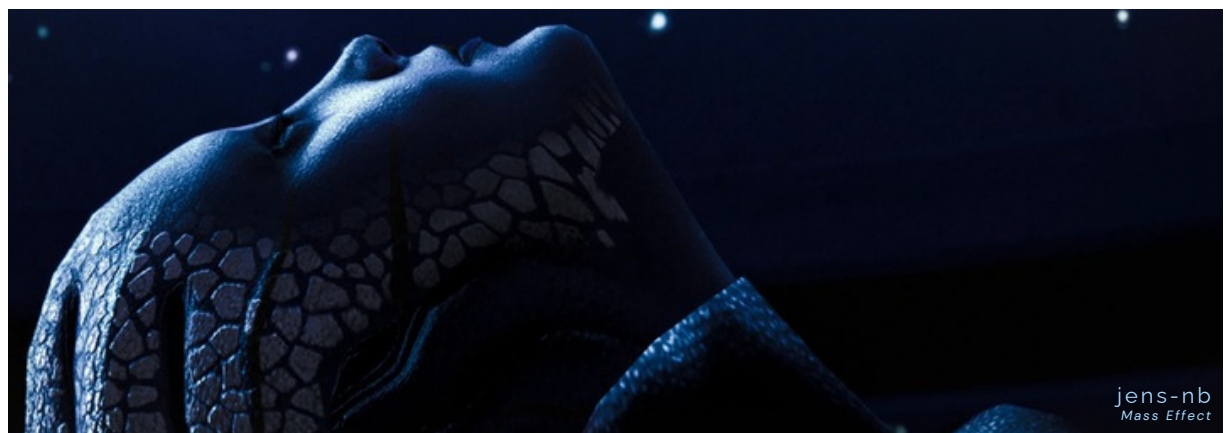
VrPhotoGames  
Death Stranding 2



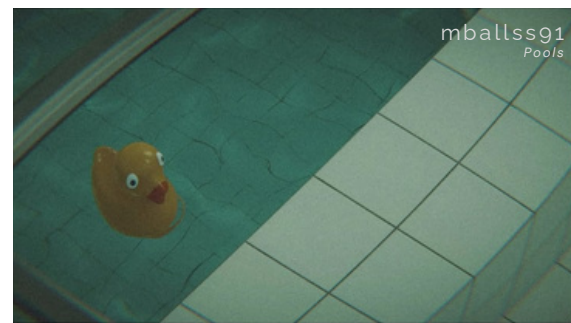
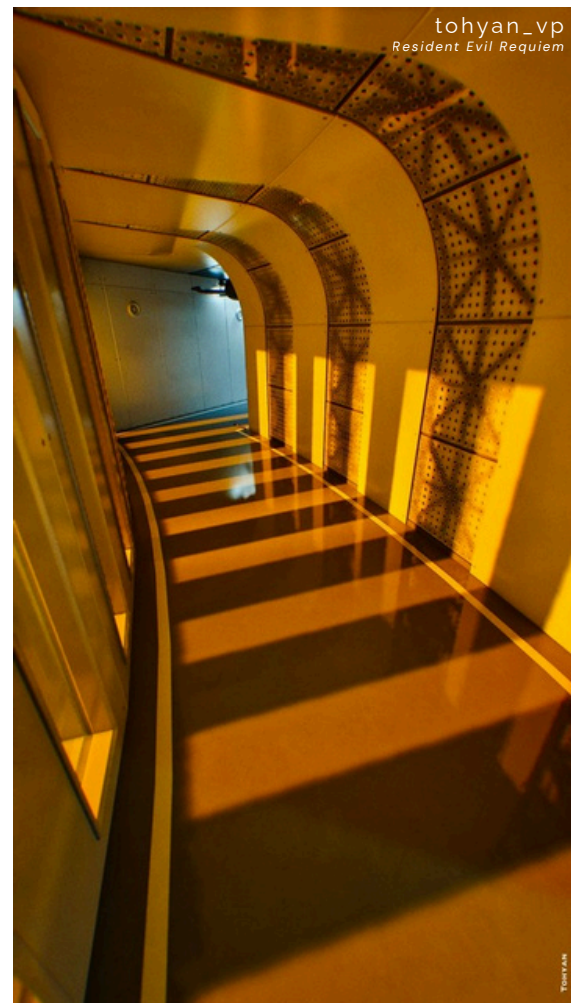
diamondglitz100  
Alan Wake 2



GioWayne86  
Death Stranding 2



jens-nb  
Mass Effect



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

Well I basically took my dad's old film camera to the race track and spent the whole day photographing. That started my photography journey right up to this day. My job is a photographer in the retail sector. But I love photographing things. The Virtual photography started around Gran Turismo 5. Back then I was part of the GTPlanet photo forums. They would have weekly competitions that anyone could enter. Those competitions continued into Gran Turismo 6. And I've won quite a few of those in GT6.

What does the creative process look like when you take photos in GT7 and what is it that you like about the game?

I would say its quite sporadic. There are times when I come up with goofy things like putting an F1 car off-road. But most of the time, I like to create images that express all my experiences through the years into either one or multiple shots. Kind of like a unique identifier. If you see my image then you immediately know that its me (silly shot of an F1 car on dirt). And the funny part is, the more you photograph, the more you discover.

I've been playing since Gran Turismo 2. I've seen and done quite a lot. In GT7, there's a lot of learning when it comes to the driving. I've learnt a lot in the game that I've used in real life driving. I get to learn about cars that I never got to see in my life. Being able to get on the game and experience them is what makes Gran Turismo special. And now we can photograph them however we want. But most racing games can do that, it's just Gran Turismo hooked me first.

@AidenRNewman  
Gran Turismo 7





EmeraldEnvoy  
Control



igm-vp  
Red Dead Redemption 2



sill\_vp  
Ghost of Tsushima



thwippip  
Returnal



asreckoner  
Alan Wake 2



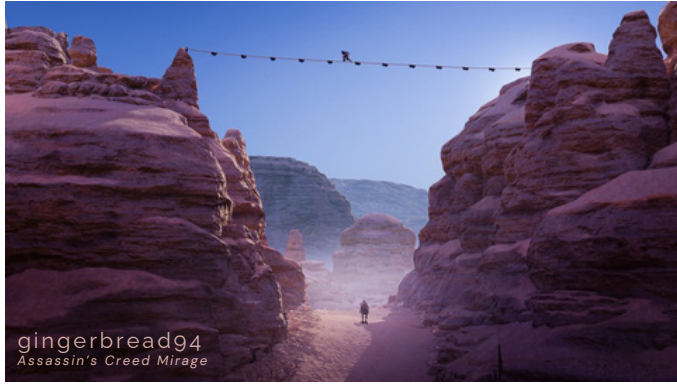
carrotscaptures\_  
Clair Obscure: Expedition 33



runtaffrun  
Horizon Forbidden West



SCTR311  
Cyberpunk 2077



gingerbread94  
Assassin's Creed Mirage



croftsnap  
Infinity Nikki



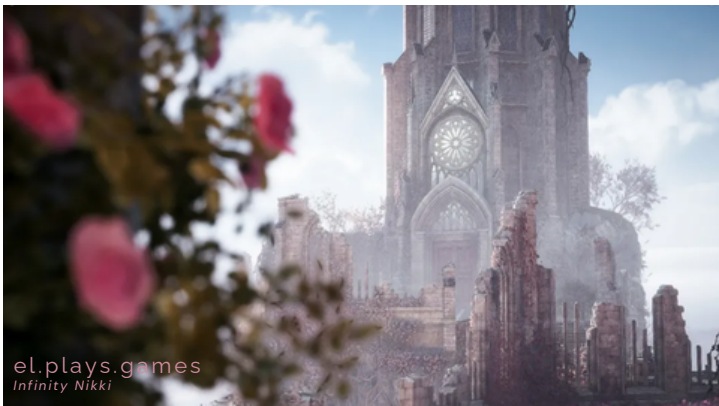
scud.photos  
Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora

jonnybubs  
Assassin's Creed Odyssey

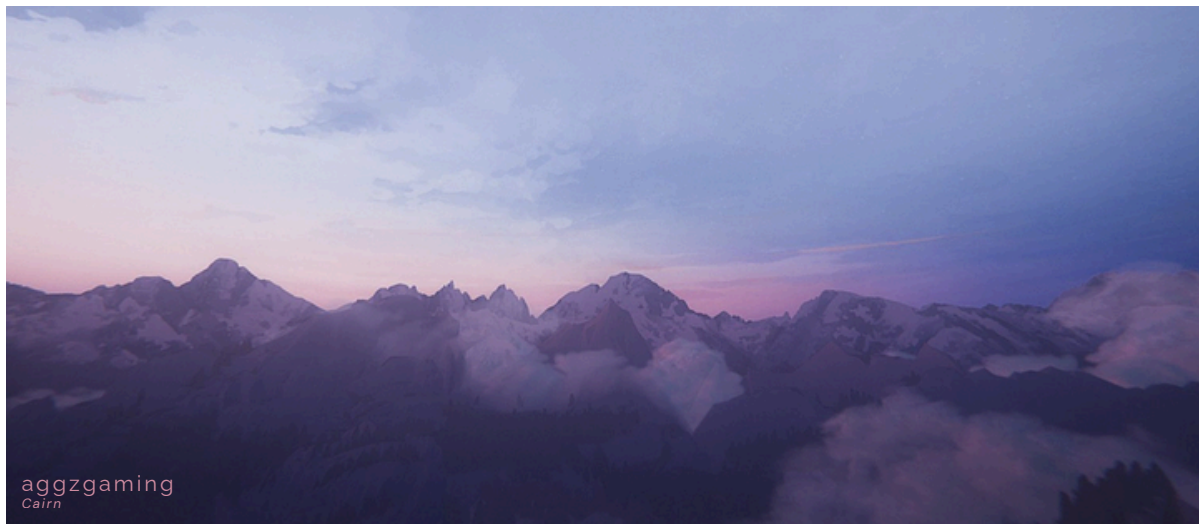


vixplaysgames.vp  
South of Midnight

nathandrake.vp  
Assassin's Creed Odyssey



el.plays.games  
Infinity Nikki



aggzgaming  
Cairn

matsuman\_vp  
*Cyberpunk 2077, Spider-Man 2,  
Forza Horizon 5*

Could you tell us a little about yourself and this particular style?

I started VP a few years ago but got consistent with it, I'd say, since the end of 2024. I shot on PS5 and by practicality I edit on Lightroom mobile.

This particular style emerged a month ago. I love black and white shots, but I wasn't quite happy with my standard black and white edit. Felt like it was missing something, a bit of soul let's say. I wanted an edit that would increase the power of the storytelling. I feel like there's an emotional depth that can be only reached by monochrome edits. So, I've started to dig into different colour grading and basic editing, playing with the S-curve, shadows, highlight and progressively finding a balance between it all. And it gave you results you can see here. Of course, every shot is different, some require adjustments, some just don't work at all. The result in the end is always influenced by the emphasis it gives to the story.

How do you manage to keep a consistent vibe and style through different games?

I always put storytelling first. I try my best to convey emotions, to produce cinematographic shots that question the viewer without disrupting the essence of the game. To maintain consistency, I usually save the edit part for Lightroom. In-game I will play with framing and lights, but colour edit rarely. Also, because my game time is limited by life itself, so I try not to spend too much time stuck in photo mode and enjoy my games obviously.





noiretblanc\_ya2  
Clair Obscur: Expedition 33



primnose  
Baldur's Gate 3

horace0816  
Resident Evil Requiem



RESIDENT EVIL Requiem  
@horace0816



sin82773349  
Pragmata



megapixel.memories  
Skate 4  
MEGAPIXEL MEMORIES



uyscuti10  
*Resident Evil Requiem*



kulma69  
*Cyberpunk 2077*



spideytwohoses  
*Spider-Man 2*



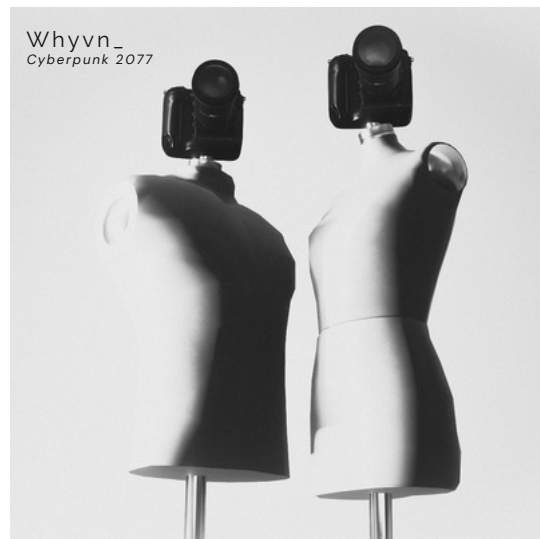
lolaclementinevp  
*Lost Records: Bloom & Rage*



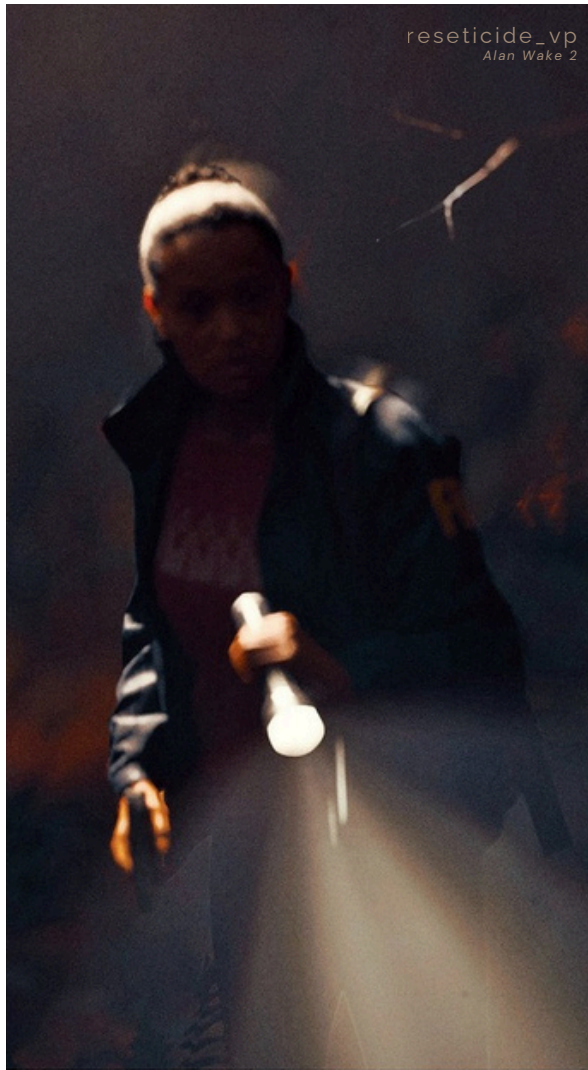
u.tenteo1  
*Alan Wake 2*



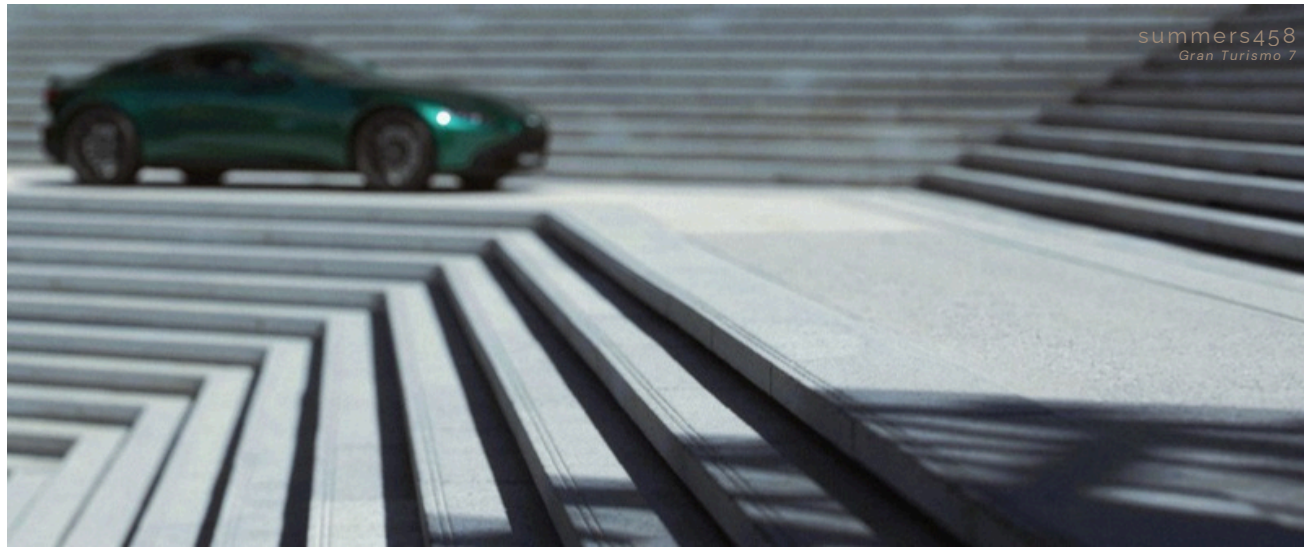
mballss91  
*the Crew 2*



Whyvn\_  
*Cyberpunk 2077*



reseticide\_vp  
Alan Wake 2



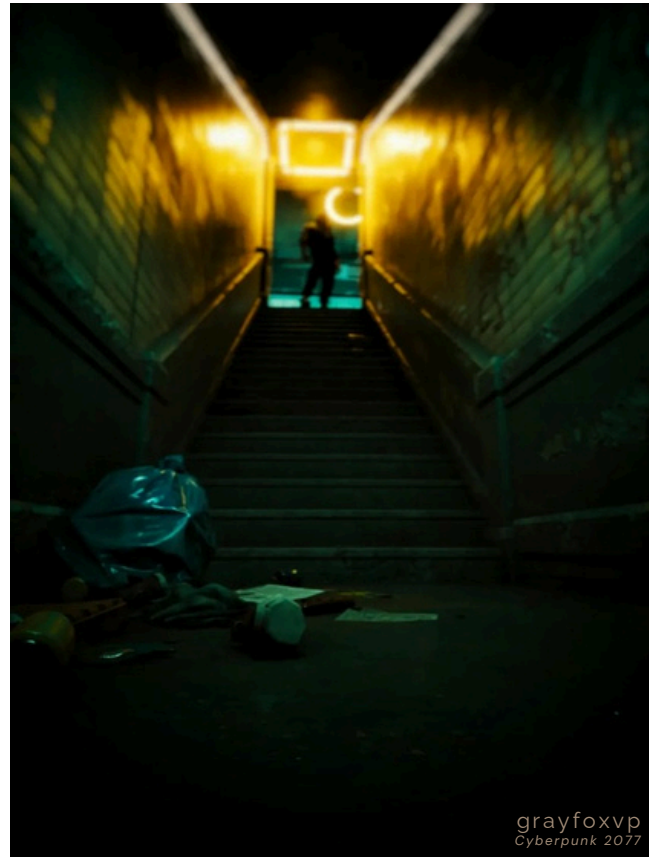
summers458  
Gran Turismo 7



minimuffinchucker  
Control



thoraxtheimpaler  
Red Dead Redemption



grayfoxvp  
Cyberpunk 2077

elenyae.vp  
*The Witcher 3*

I'm Elenyae, a former freelance photographer and a long time gamer who just recently combined this two passions thanks to VP. For years I simply used to take some screenshots on console because I found the lighting beautiful. But it was only after I started playing Baldur's Gate 3 in November 2024 -and fell completely in love with Astarion - that I discovered the world of virtual photography.

I began posting my VPs of him and the game in January 2025. And it was only in June of that year that I started revisiting my favourite games on PC to capture their essence.

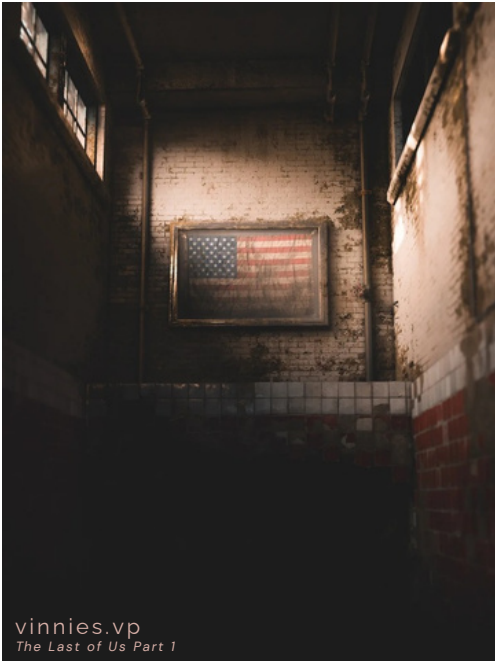
With my VPs, I try to stay true to the beauty of the game. I like to keep the in-game lighting and atmosphere, and "just" catch what blows me away when I'm playing.



I was working on a collaboration with an other VPer when I took this shot. My goal was to have a nice action shot to show the "job" part of the life of a Witcher. Because in my set I already had a lot of portraits and close-ups, for the sake of diversity, I went with the idea of a wide shot. I used the Photomode Mod by Otis\_Inf and played with the "Time of the day" features to see all the possible lighting I could get for this scene. And because the fight took place in a bushy area, I used the Shader Toggler add-on for Reshade to try to clear the space.

It's how I ended up removing all the trees and got this large, empty landscape, that gives the epic atmosphere to the photo.

Fun fact: when I unpaused the game after the shot Geralt died cause I got it so many times to get a nice placement between him and the monster.



vinnies.vp  
The Last of Us Part 1



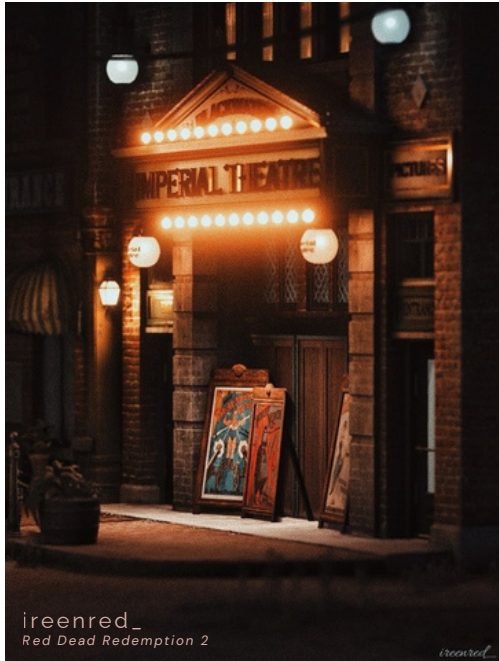
wingsforsmiles  
Uncharted 4



flacko.raf  
Ghost of Yotei Legends

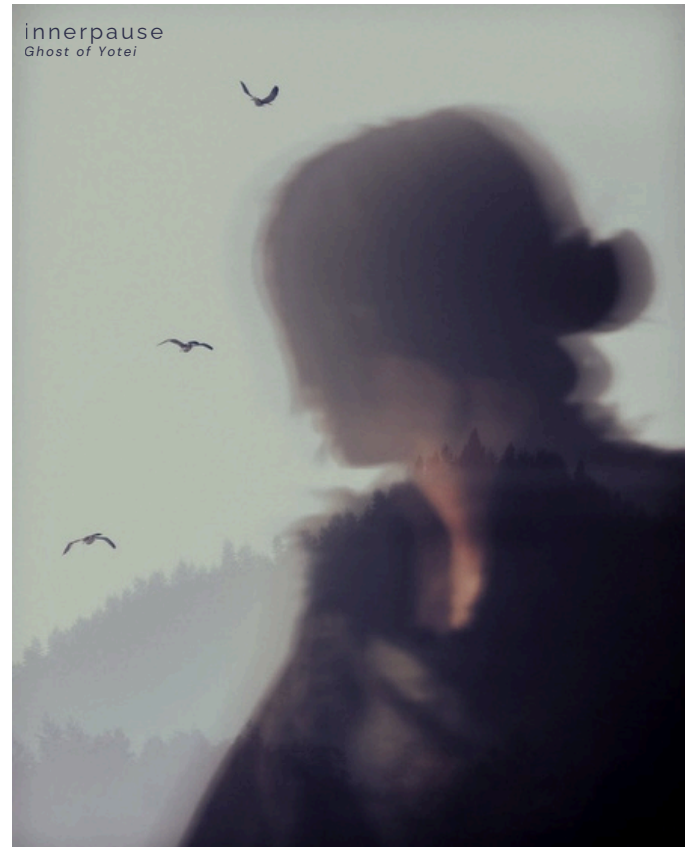


MistyMalorne  
GTA Online



ireenred\_  
Red Dead Redemption 2

ireenred





COVER BY OATHBREAK3R