The PhotoMode

UBISOFT

△ T H E
F O U R
T H F O
C U S □

AXIE
INFINITY

ASSASSIN'S
CREED

VALHALLA

Featured Artists

Twitter

dpruttz_vp
coalabr14
Sarokeye
killing_smokes
Sand_Ce
SidequestVP
WrathofBill
_suedeauxnim
WeWbt014
tpow_art19
ERIchan_game
theonlyjess_vp
SnappinVirtual
natriumiushi
DipperSmoke
iRF53TOO6l3wORm
unagippule
AmAzingDrLama
ETW_RMX_VP
jules_vp_
abdlsnfrVP
Sch_mit_z
BraveHeartss_
reddeadgem
znakiznanki
Amianan_NiRaGuB
Earthlyfaune
yuxi_noir
GameographyOff
itsjymmi
Carpo_VP
imachicken2001
coormanoo
G_Assassin90
Petanni_
hami030
NahuelPereiraa
NoviKaiba23
EthanRDR2
UVioletra
Spiggy_Smalls

Instagram

theonlyjess
rase.photography
gamingshots101
virtual_photographer_ps4
bookieandbrookie
giingiie
rennyx8vp
lizardthrope
mroosa
mk__99shots
gamerz.illusion
vikingdad278
theguyinthespacesuit
raiderebel
dipperofsmoke
throughthelensgames
the_undeadpixel
iridium_flair
ga.pho1
reddeadgem
fotinhadejogo
thegirlinafantasyworld

pauetvp
isu_assassin

Viewing The TPM Ebook

Although fliphtml5 looks good while viewing through mobile, a desktop or desktop mode on mobile will get you the highest quality possible.

Links that can be clicked will flash at the start of each page turn and are also underlined, double click or double tap screen to zoom in and out, pinch to zoom further on mobile.

Artists profile pages are found at the beginning of the mag and their names under the images throughout will take you to the original posts we asked for a statement from.

Remember if you like one of the features within the mag click the TPM ◆ Logo next to the image to be taken direct to their Twitter / Instagram posts and drop some support.

We love the art form of Virtual Photography and we hope you can show as much support to as many of these talented artists as you possibly can.

Our Page Is Your Stage

This is our motto here at TPM, whether its our Instagram, Twitter or this Magazine we dedicate our pages to you the Virtual Photography community.

Our 2 main goals are...

To support you by getting your work shown on our socials with your words, we feel that helps people you don't know or don't interact with much to get to see a glimpse of the personality behind the work and connect with
 you in a different way.

To help push the art form in a direction so that those who do want to try and earn from VP at least have the chance to do so.

We Encourage

Building real community support around your page and that starts with YOU.
Search different # once a day.

We recommend starting with...

#VirtualPhotography

#ThePhotoMode

#VGPUnite

Drop some love, uplifting comments and follow people you connect with, its the fastest way to grow your page and also thats how you build a real community support network.

TEAM

Editor in Chief -
AltRealityVP

Deeply passionate about VP and involved in its community since 2014.
lover of B&W portrait captures.
"I can be a bit of a goof"

Twitter Community Manager -
VirtualTourism

A part of the community for 3 years, History nerd in my spare time, love games and everything VP.
"Say it how it is"

Editor - PoachiiN

Intrigued by the rapidly expanding medium of Virtual Photography and its community of creatives. Loves sci-fi, landscapes and monochrome portraits. Likes to cook and eat all spanish food. In the words of Pat Benatar
"Hit me with your best shot."

Insta Community Manager -
neovandalizam

Passionate gamer with desire to bring virtual photography closer to people outside gaming. Loves tattoos, street photography, neo-expressionism, and contemporary art.
"Save them Z's for later."

Contributing Author -
The Fourth Focus

Owner of TheFourthFocus.com, Mik loves capturing compelling images and hopes to use his experience in both real and virtual photography to help others get the most out of their creativity. "Usally right."
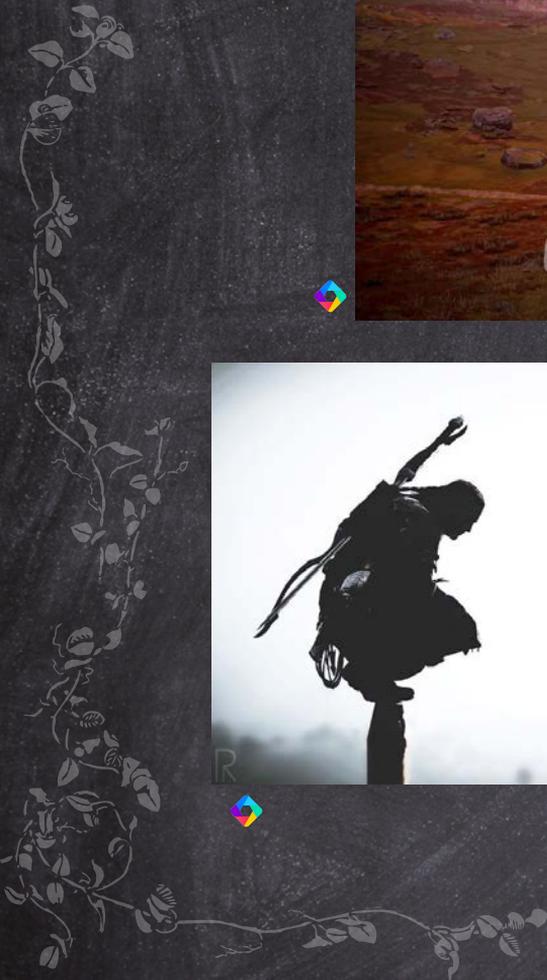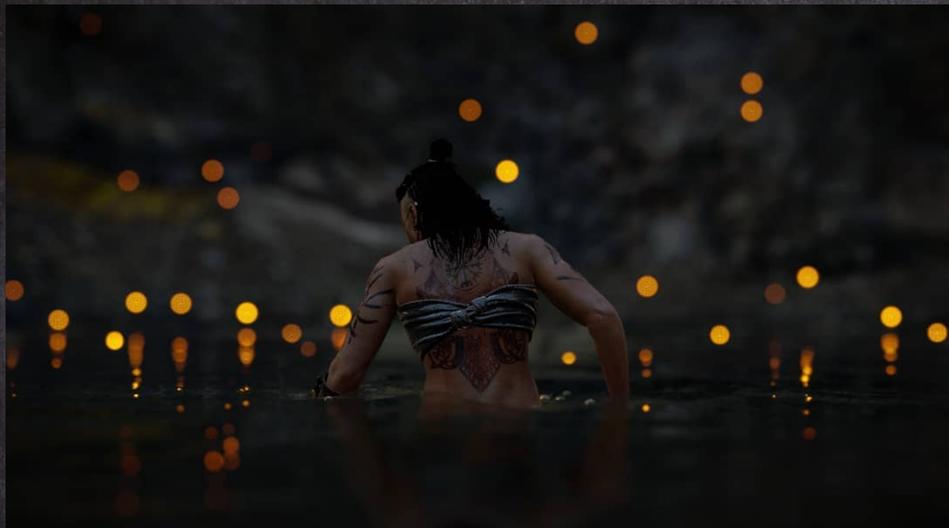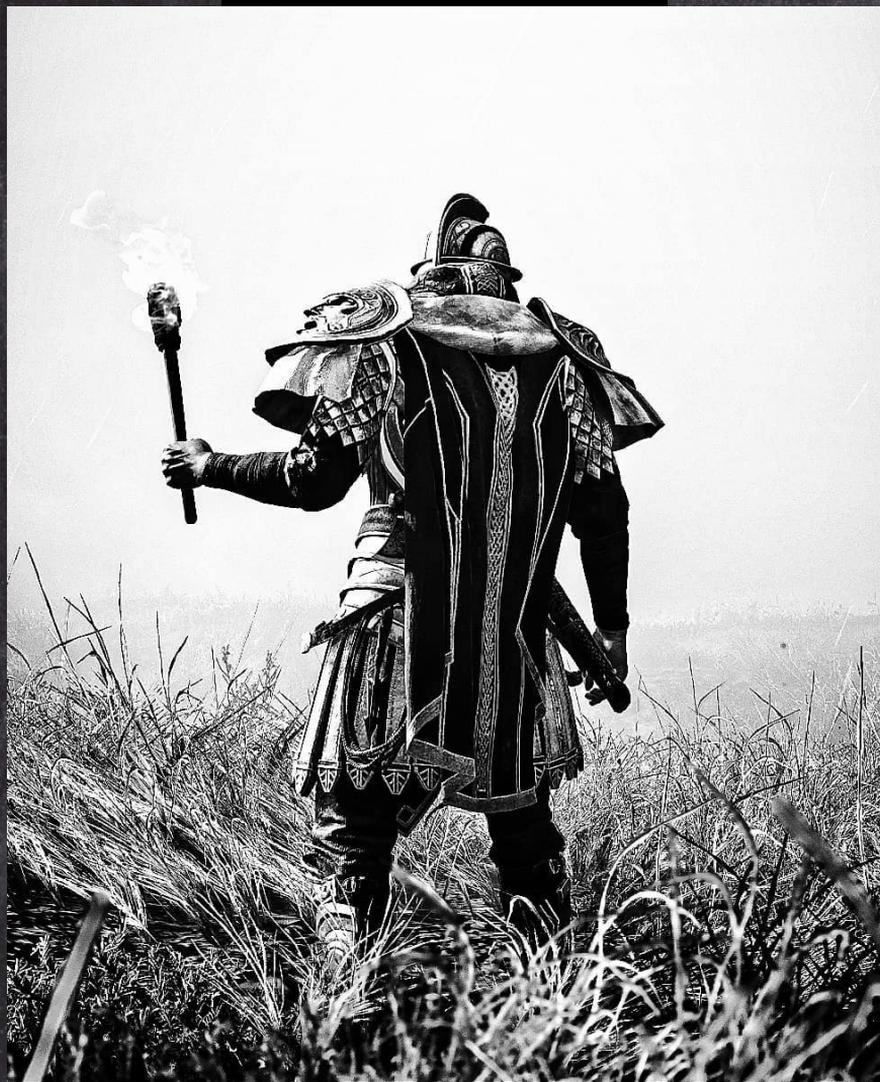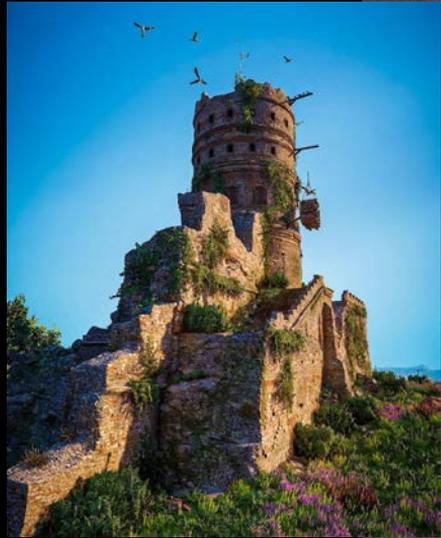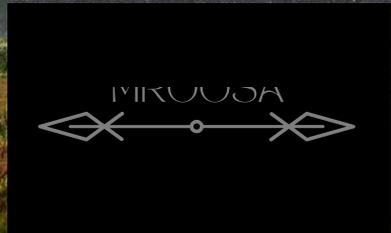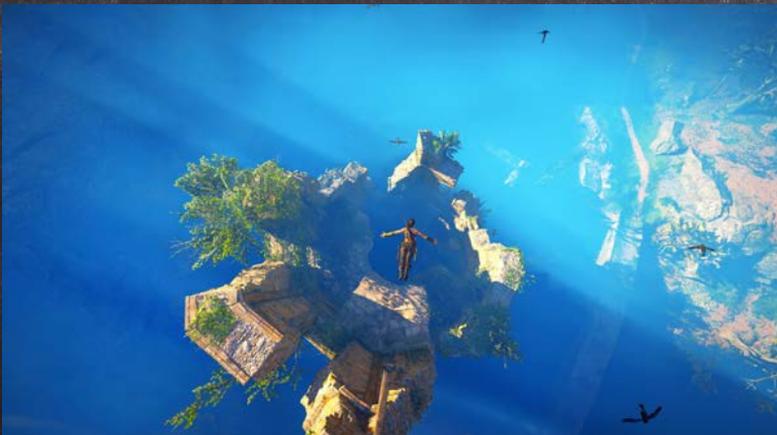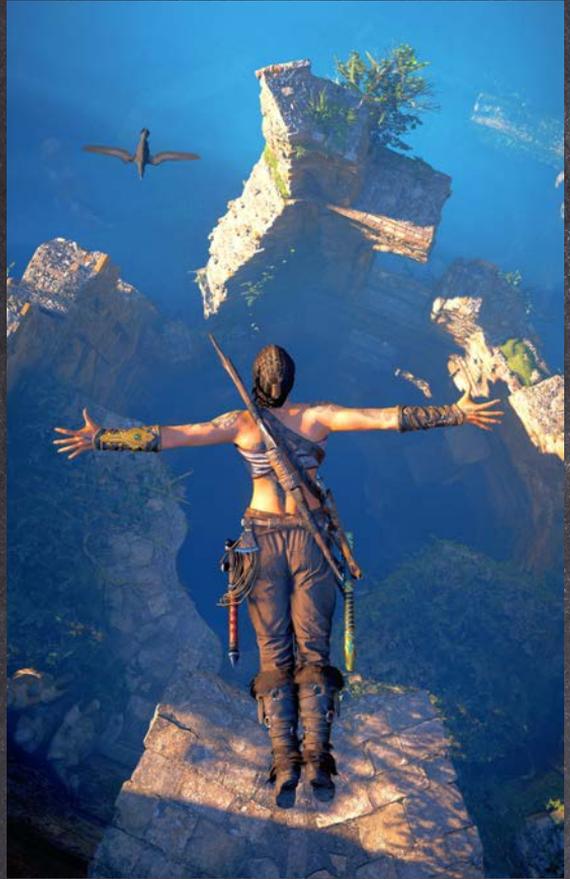
Q&A
Wiih
Raphael Lacosie

Ryan / Poachiin
TPM Editor

Raphael Lacoste
Former Art Director
of Ubisoft Montreal

If you're a fan of the Assassin's Creed franchise and the varying, historical setting of each game, you will know Art Director Raphael Lacoste's work. With eight AC titles under his belt, Raphael talks to TPM about some aspects of the process of executing the aesthetics of worlds from concept to publication.

On the recces of Norway and England that your team completed for research, were there any moments that heavily altered your plans for how the game would look?

Before pushing the world creation in the game engine too far, we went on a scouting trip in England and Norway, we also did many concept arts and accumulated a lot of research. From all this inspirational content, we needed to make creative choices to support the feeling of an epic journey, build memorable moments , and create a strong desire for exploration.

We knew early on that we would have very bold contrasts between regions and seasons we wanted to bring to life in the game.

Definitely, after hiking in the magnificent Lofoten in Norway, in the forest of Dean, in England and the beautiful coast of Ravenscar, we were inspired to push to the next level this variety of the world and create wonder in the multiple territories of our game.

This eventually helped us a lot to build this feeling of a journey, and create a mental map of the game. Everything came naturally thanks to the beautiful visual feel of change brought to our eyes with seasons, biomes, architecture and topography.

My first impression of landing in England as Eivor was, "this place is really damp", is it a greater challenge to light areas in which surfaces and terrain is wet?

Every single biome and landscape has its own challenges. The Damp and Swampy area was a "flat kind of land" so the challenge there was more to create interesting compositions.

This is why we took inspiration from our trip in West Stow and composed a nice setting with elegant tall pine trees and organic silhouettes like the crannog villages built on stilts. Also, the sky is occupying a large part of the setting so we paid a particular attention to clouds and cirrus composition in this biome. As you mentioned, the wetness, the atmosphere were also important key elements to bring credibility to this area of England. So we used our scanned textures and mixed swamp materials to make sure the ground was as realistic and immersive as our atmospheric elements.

Favourite architectural feature to build and why?

It is a difficult question, after having spent so much time on building Cities for AC, I must say that I particularly enjoyed this time working on biomes, trees assets, compositions and natural landmarks. I think Nature is making AC Valhalla very distinct from other AC Games and if some other titles were unique for their large cities, our Viking journey is also a love letter to the beauty of England and Norway , to their various lands and rich Nature.

Why do region-specific colour palettes in Valhalla work?

Early in game conception, I wanted to set specific seasons to the world map. I intended to have bold moods and palettes for each region, making sure every single narrative arc would have a unique mood and a memorable tone visually speaking, anchoring the story in unique moments.

This creative choice also helps the player to have their own mental map of the world, thanks to the unique visual atmosphere of each territory.

If we had for instance a Spring season in the whole world of England, the mood and local colours would have been too similar and exploration would have been less exciting.

I think it's way more memorable and inspiring to discover a new region set in a surprising mood, palette, like when discovering Northumbria in winter after long hours settling in the warm red fall of Mercia, or even the green-lush and vibrant summer of Wessex.

What artistic decisions had to be made regarding a quite colourful, vibrant England versus the general gloominess associated with anything set in the Dark Ages?

Very good point, and I am happy you noticed this. Indeed it was one of the key points of the Artistic Direction of this game, we wanted to avoid the expected 'cliché' of the Dark Ages.

We are lucky as world builders to create a world from a blank page, so we wanted to make sure to bring a vibrant and memorable Viking Saga to our players and not another muddy, gloomy and overcast dark age entertainment creation :)

For all the reasons mentioned above: the visual journey, mental map and exploration loop, the choice of seasons, contrasts and bold colour palettes were key in the success of this open world game.

What is the most essential ingredient to immersive worldbuilding?

Make sure the player is surprised all the time, and always keeps his desire for exploring.
This is coming from the smart environment design composition, reveals, contrasts in shapes and silhouettes (appeal from the distance).
But mainly, you want to make sure the player falls in love with the world…
this is a very complex recipe and our talented artists have an amazing challenge to make sure the world they build is always surprising and interesting , not redundant, beautiful and significantly awe inspiring.

Thank you for talking with us Raph, and thank you for letting TPM be one of the last publications to print your words as Ubisoft Art Director, best of luck on your journey at Haven Studios.

IMACHICKEN2001

RAIDEREBEL
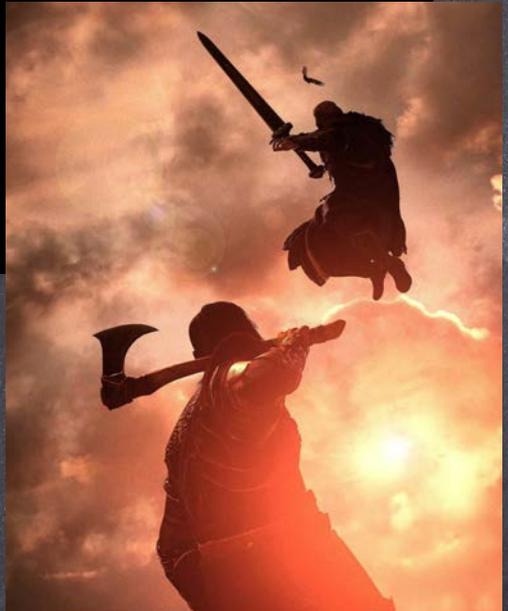
ASSASSIN'S CREED
VALHALLA

REVIEW

△THE
FOUR
THFO
CUS□

ASSASSIN'S CREED VALHALLA
REVIEW

Now in its 12th main series entry, and with an equal number of smaller spin-off titles, Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed is undoubtedly one of the most established and most successful franchises in video gaming. The stealth-action juggernaut may have evolved somewhat since its first incarnation, but shows no signs of slowing down after Assassin's Creed Valhalla became the fastest selling game in the series so far when it launched on cross-generation consoles and PC in late 2020.

Following the formula of the Ancient Egyptian Assassin's Creed Origins and the Greek adventures of Assassin's Creed Odyssey, Valhalla moves to another new period in history and again forgoes the linear narrative roots of the earlier series in favour of a fully open world with deep RPG mechanics. Naturally, given its burgeoning popularity, Valhalla is also complete with Ubisoft's usual photo mode ready for use as you roam over land and sea.

As the name suggests, this latest entry is heavily Norse inspired and sees you play the role of clan leader, Eivor during the 9th century migration of Vikings into Anglo-Saxon England as you travel by longship from the cold lands of Norway to the English countryside. With the usual conflict between Assassin's and the Templar Order providing an underlying narrative along the way, Eivor's journey will centre around forging new alliances with local Kingdoms and eliminating key members of the Order of the Ancients while in search of a new home.

Being an Assassin's Creed game, there is a present-day timeline to justify this journey into the past, and the returning Layla Hassan once again uses the Animus device to relive genetic memories after uncovering the remains of Eivor, all in the hope of averting a catastrophe in the present. Leveraging Layla's discovery, the story does neatly use the myth and uncertainty surrounding the memory streams of the once great Viking hero to allow both male and female versions of Eivor to be official story canon this time and, regardless of which you choose, it is the overall historical setting that gives the game its true identity.

Gameplay-wise, many familiar elements return, but Valhalla also moves things on from Origins & Odyssey by bringing back some mechanics from earlier games that have been absent since the switch to an RPG-style. Particularly, these include the social stealth element that the series was originally known for, and the option to upgrade your home base with bigger and better buildings using the prized loot gathered from all of the inevitable pillaging.

In fact, a lot of the time in England will be spent raiding the surrounding population and generally setting fire to settlements, but there is also a total freedom to explore – along with a new winged companion in the form of a raven called Sýnin – and the ability to partake in local activities such as fishing, hunting, dice and drinking games that all sit well with a photographic hobby.

Key Photo Mode Features:

- **Composition mode with free camera & optional orbit**
- **Edit mode with with bloom & fog control**
- **Interactive photo locations on in-game map**

Controls & Implementation:

Anyone familiar with recent Assassin's Creed games will largely know what to expect from the Valhalla photo mode as Ubisoft take the "don't fix what isn't broken" approach. With just a minor evolution of what was last seen in AC Odyssey, the same UI design with its distinct Composition and Edit modes makes a return in familiar fashion.

With convenient access via the L3 & R3 button binding, the photo mode is available at any time outside of pre-rendered cutscenes, and first presents the user with the Composition mode along with a minimal on-screen UI. Showing the control legend and any one of the 4 available grid guides – including crosshair, diagonal and thirds – the UI can be hidden with a press of Δ, but only to take the final shot. Any other action, even moving the camera, will immediately pop it back into view in a way that could be a little irksome for those who prefer to finesse their composition with a completely unobstructed view.

Camera movement itself is well handled with lateral truck & dolly on the LS, vertical craning on the D-pad, and a full 360° pan with near-vertical tilt on the RS allowing quick and convenient positioning of the camera. A decently sized bounding sphere determines the available range of that movement, and 180° of camera roll via the L1 / R1 shoulder buttons ensures that almost any type of compositional style can be achieved.

It deserves mentioning actually, that the bounding area is fully 3-dimensional and allows the camera to be placed at levels lower than the playable character as well as underwater – both things that are surprisingly uncommon in most photo modes and are well suited to take advantage of various gameplay elements in Assassin's Creed.

For an extra compositional option, holding L3 while operating the RS replaces the pan / tilt control with an orbit mode that rotates around whatever object the centre reticle falls on. While handy for fine-tuning portrait angles, this mode can quickly become chaotic as the orbit will re-centre around any object that passes over the centre of the viewfinder; thankfully a click on R3 will reset the camera should things go a little awry for you.

In terms of lens options, AC Valhalla makes use of a fairly straightforward zoom function, accompanied by a subtle mechanical sound effect as you widen or narrow the field of view using the L2 / R2 triggers. There is no given value for the amount of zoom or effective focal length, but my eye tells me it is not much more than ~70 mm at the maximum zoom level. With the zoom not really venturing into the telephoto range then, you may find and urge to get physically closer to the subject to frame close-up details or achieve particularly tight crops, and this leads to probably the biggest failing in the Composition mode.

For example, when working on an intimate character portrait and gradually edging the camera closer to the subject, the game will detect an impending collision and remove the character model from view. Ordinarily, this would be no problem and simply nudging the camera back a fraction would allow the model to reappear, but in Valhalla's photo mode, that doesn't happen until the camera has moved far enough away again. This inevitably spoils the composition and leaves you once again edging closer to restore it, desperately hoping not to do the same thing all over again.

EDIT MODE

Cycle Frame Left

Cycle Frame Right

Cycle Filter Left ——— Capture

Cycle Filter Right

Preview / Hide UI

Menu Up / Down

Exit (Hold)

Take Photo (In UI)

Toggle Headgear

Move Focus Target
L3 Composition Mode

Adjust Setting Left / Right
R3 Reset Setting (Hold For All)

L3 & R3: Enter Photo Mode

COMPOSITION MODE

Zoom Out

Zoom In

Roll CCW ——— Capture

Roll CW

Preview / Hide UI

Truck / Crane

Exit (Hold)

Take Photo (In UI)

Cycle Grids

Truck / Dolly
L3 Edit Mode

Pan / Tilt
R3 Reset Camera

L3 & RS Orbit Camera
L3 & R3: Enter Photo Mode

That is an admittedly specific use case, and once the composition has been mastered, it is time to head over to the Edit mode with a single press of L3. From here, almost every input is remapped – hence the two separate controller layouts above – although, quite what the logic is behind splitting menu navigation and adjustment between the D-pad and RS, I do not know.

More intuitively, the LS now operates an on-screen cursor that is used to set the specific point of camera focus. Helpfully defaulting to Eivor's face when visible, the cursor is simply placed of the subject or part of an object that is desired to be in sharp focus, and a defocus effect is then applied to the background and foreground on either side of it. The strength of this defocus is determined by a single DoF control slider with a range of 0-100 and can be used to create an authentic-looking depth of field with pleasantly rendered circular bokeh on distant points of light.

Note - in my time with the game, I did find that the DoF effect would malfunction on occasion; sometimes not being applied at all, and others at a much greater distance from the camera than intended. When encountering this, reloading a recent save seemed to return the DoF to normal behaviour.

As well as the handy focus control, the static UI of the Edit mode is otherwise dominated by a simple list of settings and a series of filter preview thumbnails, or analogous frame previews when selecting any of the 9 graphical overlays. The filters are in fact, preset configurations of the available settings and can each be used as an editable starting point, but not in addition to any manual adjustments.

Amongst the options, all of which use the same 0-100 scale, a group of colour-oriented sliders give precise tonal adjustment with Temperature & Tint bringing useful white balance control across the blue-to-yellow and green-to-magenta ranges, while Saturation can be used to create a B&W or much more vivid colour image. If anything, the latter too strong and boosting saturation can quickly make skin tones appear unnatural, but overall these are very useful tools for correcting white balance throughout the day or creating a vivid shot of the beautiful particularly landscapes.
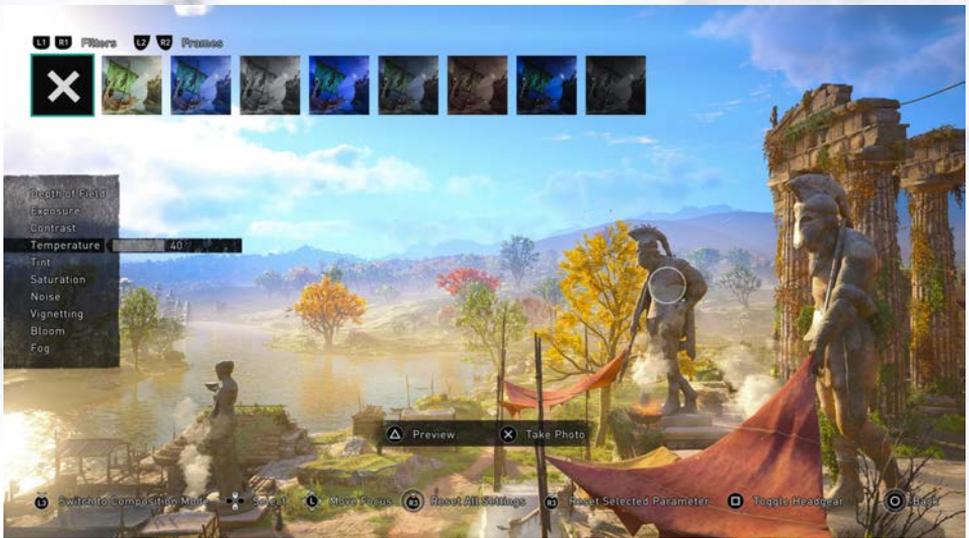
For added authenticity, a believable film grain / noise effect and simple vignette can be included, but it is the Bloom & Fog options that add the most interest. Simulating the effect of signal bleed from an intense light source onto neighbouring pixels on a digital camera sensor, the bloom adds an elegantly diffuse glow around bright highlights, while the fog does exactly as you might expect and generates fog / mist in the environment to increase the sense of atmosphere.

But there is a problem, and it is mostly down to the in-game lighting. While so often majestic as it falls across a countryside vista (we'll ignore the constantly passing shadows from even non-existent clouds), the light in Valhalla does not always interact particularly well with character models. Anything other than the most contrasting bright light leaves subjects lacking detailed shadows or sharp highlights and ultimately looking very "gamey" and unrealistic.

This is especially so when using HDR on the relatively low default peak brightness and exposure settings and yes, boosting them does help and there is an Exposure compensation that will greatly over- or underexpose a scene, but the behaviour remains very flat and the Contrast slider does little to alleviate things as it fails to properly strengthen blacks or create any separation between the shadows and highlights.

With no custom lighting or time of day options to speak of, other than meditating to shift the game to dawn or dusk, the hunt for the right lighting becomes a job to do before even entering the photo mode. Of course, that is not entirely unrealistic when it comes to photography and the direct light from a low sun is useful to add some much-needed depth and dramatic detail to the resulting shots, it simply becomes a mission of importance to seek it out.

The opportunities are there though, and the game has one more trick up its sleeve that goes a long way to boosting the profile of virtual photography. Being able to capture images with either the standard Create / Share button on the controller or by pressing X as shown on the UI does seem odd at first, and the latter will unfortunately only result in a compressed JPG, but there is a higher purpose. The UI-based captures can be uploaded directly to the Valhalla Photo Mode website if signed in, and are also brilliantly integrated into the in-game map where they will pop up at the location the shot was taken as markers for friends to see. It's a great feature and still something that I would love to see a whole website dedicated to.

Subscribe to the fortnightly newsletter for all the latest features from TheFourthFocus.com

Photographic Opportunity:

With such a strong character as the main protagonist, the Viking hero naturally becomes the most obvious subject for photographers in AC Valhalla. The cleverly justified duality also makes Eivor a subject with more stylistic options than most by being able to switch between the male & female versions for different shots. While not possible to change gender directly within the photo mode, the option is available at any time via the Animus, or you can simply let the game choose the strongest memory stream.

Customisation doesn't stop there either, as unique armour pieces and weaponry can be swapped around to allow mix & match combinations, and upgraded settlements give Eivor the chance to sport new hairstyles and non-permanent tattoos to create a style of your own. That said, the Vikings are no vanity models and Valhalla remains true to its murderous lineage with plenty of violent loss of life.

The somewhat clumsy standard combat is soon enhanced by various skills and abilities the elevate the gameplay with more interesting, and more devastating attacks that are ripe for action shot opportunities. Likewise, the improved assassination and stealth elements lend another dimension to the action and can even be used to blend in with the locals for more candid behavioural captures.

The surroundings have plenty to offer too. Populated areas are interesting places to be as the populous of warriors and townsfolk mingle around contemporary Viking and Saxon structures with a backdrop of crumbling castles and the dilapidated ruins of the long-since vacated Roman Empire. Remarkably intricate both inside and out, the more urban environments have no shortage of things to focus the photo mode's virtual lens on and the game does a great job of creating "everyday life" in 872-878 AD that sets it apart from the feeling of other recent Norse-inspired titles.

Get away from the occupied areas and the small population quickly vanishes to leave an often unsullied landscape to enjoy. Starting off in the snowy and somewhat desolate reaches of Norway where obvious features can be sparse, it is easy to see the potential in terrain that has been created with lots of verticality and detailed topography by evidently talented environment artists. Make the journey to England and this pays dividends as the autumnal forests amidst rolling hills become the star attraction and ensure that it is a pleasure to roam across the Yorkshire Moors, stand atop Dover's famous white cliffs or seek out famous stone circles on Salisbury Plain.

It is in areas such as this that the game's light finds its best abilities with sunrises casting crisp low light through the morning mist and enormous sunsets bathing the land and diverse wildlife in deep oranges to give an endless supply of picturesque scenes. Perhaps the best thing about this, is just how easy the whole area is to explore thanks to the ability to largely ignore mission quests and walk, ride or sail to wherever piques your interest.

The latter two options even make exploration semi-autonomous by following roads and rivers to distant waypoints like a guided tour of the entirety of Eastern England, while Eivor's remarkable climbing ability leaves virtually nowhere out of reach.

Better yet, Sýnin is able to cover the entire map from above, not only avoiding the risk of being drawn into a fight with high-level foes but providing a flying starting point for the photo mode camera at any time. These elevated viewpoints and perspectives would never be possible from the ground and really do add another dimension to the photo mode, effectively like a camera drone for the Middle Ages, and if all of that isn't enough, you can always head to Asgard!

Verdict:

Assassin's Creed Valhalla may not be leading the way in technological terms, either in the photo mode or the game itself, and it does come with a few rough edges but that does not stop it being one of the best entries in Ubisoft's perennial series. Sticking with tried and tested elements for the most part, the developer clearly knows how to satisfy a dedicated fanbase of gamers and virtual photographers with minor tweaks to the formula and enticing new settings.

In an era where the biggest photo mode-centric titles are embracing evermore advanced options though, an overly safe approach leaves the Valhalla camera tools feeling a little less than state-of-the-art. The thing is, that almost doesn't matter as the interesting historical setting and fantastically beautiful environments are reason enough to recommend this as an RPG to get lost in with camera at the ready.

△ THE
FOUR
THFOC
CUS□   THEFOURTHFOCUSVERDICT
        RECOMMENDED

[Disclaimer: Assassin's Creed Valhalla reviewed on PS5 with a retail copy provided by The PhotoMode]
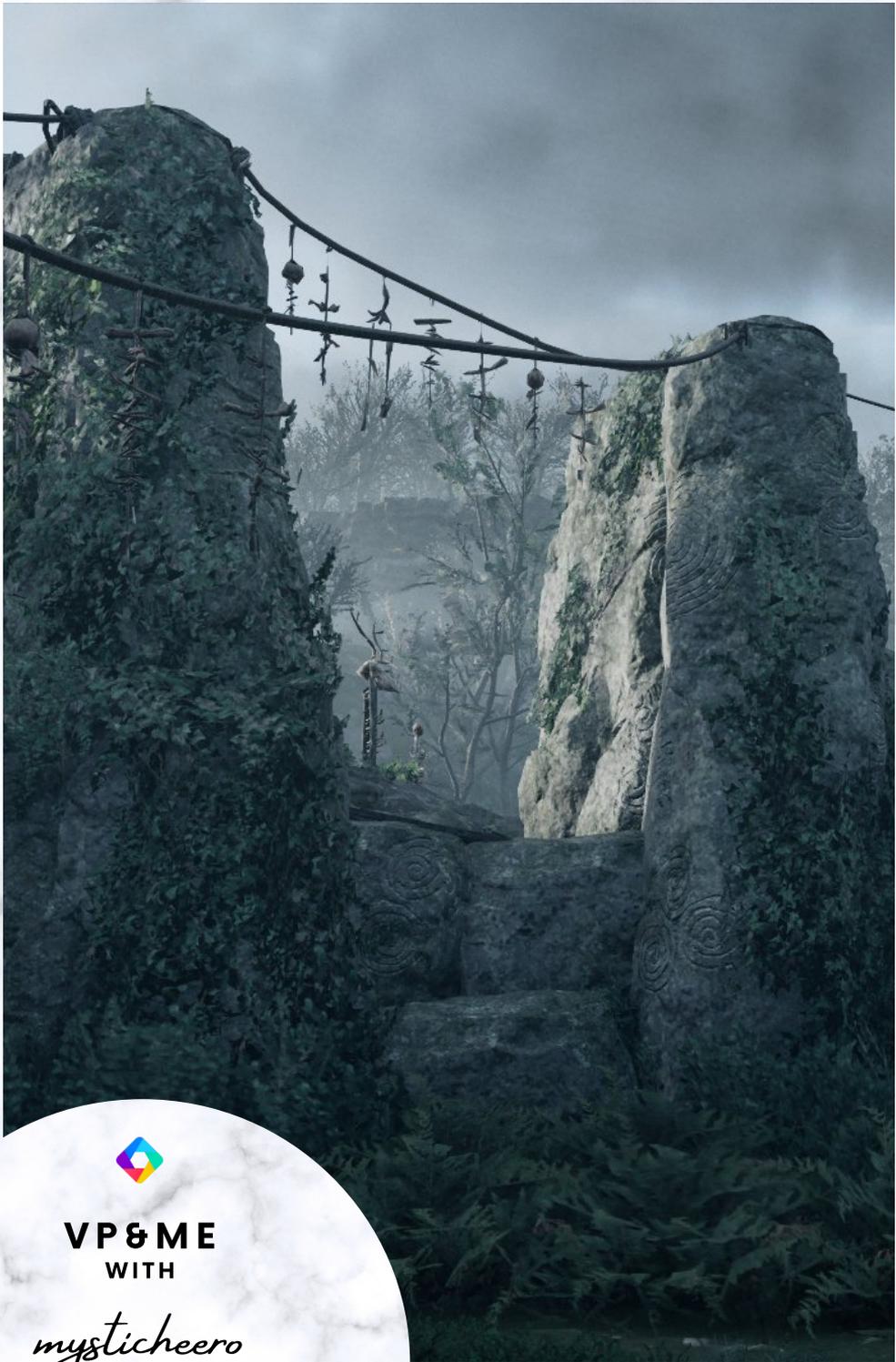
VP&ME

WITH

mysticheero

Ryan / Poachiin
TPM Editor

mysticheero
Virtual Photographer

Siobhan takes fantastic, interesting shots in the worlds of Assassin's Creed. Here, she talks about her process, virtual photography more broadly, and her role with the Mentor's Guild.

_____

Which was the very first game that you started playing around with regarding photo mode? What was it about that game that started off this process?

Assassin's Creed Origins was the first game I started using photo mode in. I have had moments in almost every game I've played where I've wanted to take a screenshot of something because I've loved it so much, but the technology wasn't there at a satisfying level. In Origins, I was thrilled they included Photo Mode and I could finally take the shots I wanted. It was slow starting; I wasn't very skilled at it, but I had fun playing the settings and loved the sheer expanse of opportunity that was offered.

You create a great deal of wonderful shots from Assassin's Creed Valhalla, what is it about the aesthetic of the game that you're drawn to?

When I play Valhalla, I am always just so amazed by the beautiful work that has gone into it, and I'm instantly pulled in to look at every detail or just stop and take in the view. I have always been a fan of historical fantasy settings, something about it is just inspiring for me and makes me feel so creative, and in Valhalla everything feels so alive.

It is almost effortless to capture a stunning scene in photo mode because every view is so beautiful and I feel like I'm walking around in real life because it is so immersive with the changing weather, lighting and sounds.

What constitutes an excellent shot in your opinion?

Something with a clear focus. If you cannot easily identify what the shot is trying to show you, whether is a specific small target or a much wider scenic view, then it detracts from the overall effect no matter how high resolution something is. Having a shot with good lighting does not mean much if there isn't something to show off that lighting – rolling scenery or a character standing in a sunbeam, or near a fire. It doesn't have to be big things or meticulous editing, sometimes it's simple, subtle details that really bring a shot to life.

Who in the Virtual Photography community inspires you and why?

Honestly, everyone inspires me. I see people out there sharing their shots and loving the games and it makes me want to join in. Seeing that passion coming through, no matter what level their skill is or how many photos they take, is amazing and it makes me feel so proud to be a part of that community.

I take photos that please me, but I draw inspiration from other people's work when I see how differently they have framed a shot or altered the colour scale or similar, and I use that to help improve my own work.

Should Virtual Photography be considered an art form?

Definitely. I think of Virtual Photography the same way as Photography that is done with a camera, it is just happening in a virtual setting instead of a physical one. You are still lining up your shot, changing the camera settings to create effects, capturing that moment you want to preserve for whatever reason it appeals to you.

Art is all about inspiration and creativity, no matter the medium. Its about expressing or conjuring emotions, telling a story or challenging how we think, or even simply showing our admiration for something.
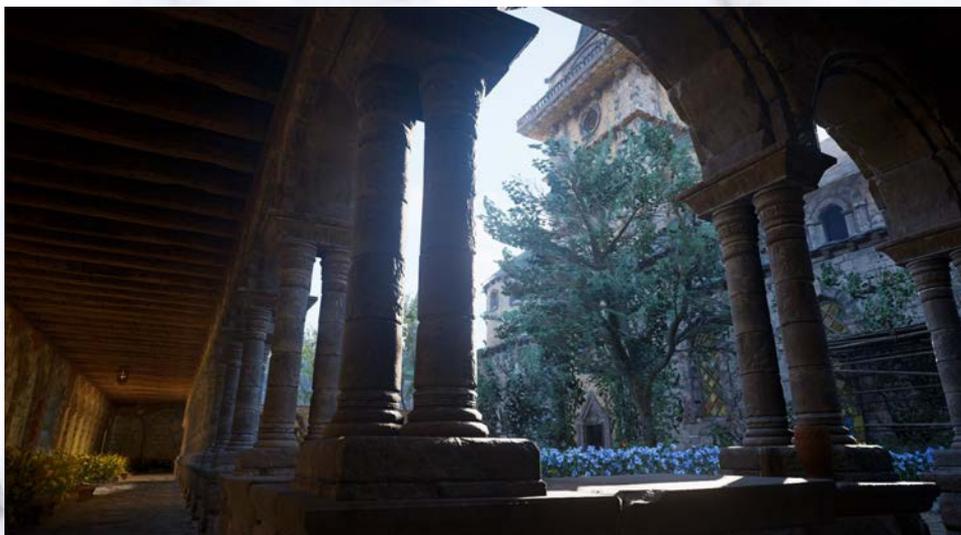
You're a member of the Mentor's Guild, what does this entail?

As a member of the Mentor's Guild, I act as a bridge between the Community and Ubisoft to help with spreading information about the Assassin's Creed franchise, supporting other fans with any issues and helping to encourage their own passions.

We run charity fundraisers for a range of causes and hold competitions highlighting the community's affection for all things Assassin's Creed. The Mentor's Guild is there to help create a safe place to enjoy what we love all over the globe.

Ubisoft often features comprehensive photo modes in their games, which have been your favourites thus far?

Assassin's Creed Valhalla's photo mode is my favourite by far; it has just sucked me right in and I love every moment of it. The sheer range of how you can alter the settings is brilliant and easy to use but the game is so beautifully diverse already you do not even have to change a thing to capture a good shot.

Do you have any advice for people who might be considering taking shots for the first time?

Focus on what you like rather than worrying about taking a good shot. Think about what grabs your attention, why do you want to take this shot? Draw inspiration from other people on things to try, but do not compare yourself to their work, as that is not the important part. Play around with the settings, move the camera around, see how it changes things and discover what you like and most importantly; have fun while creating something.
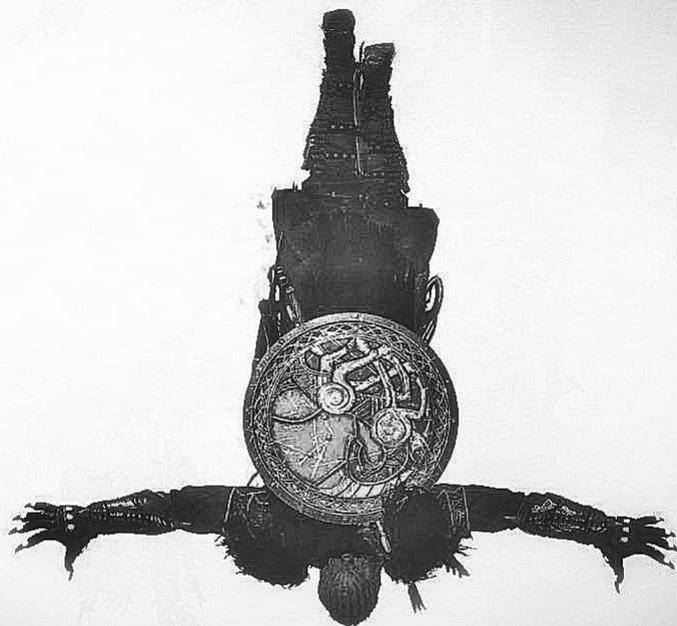
SIDEQUESTVF

**Alex / AltRealityVP**
TPM Cheif Editor

Jihoz_Axie
Co-Founder Axie Infinity

Axie Infinity is the number one game built using blockchain technology and the perfect example of how a community can build a player-based economy all of its own. This game has seen huge growth, especially over the last year, with its total value of transactions beating DeFi projects, this value is player owned. Axie Infinity is literally changing lives, and game developers all over the globe have taken notice, so it's our great pleasure to sit down and talk with Co-Founder Jihoz_Axie

———————————

How long have you been a gamer and what was the first game you remember playing?

Been playing games since I was four or five years old. Donkey Kong Country on SNES. It came with the console.

What was your first experience with blockchain?

Trying to buy Bitcoin in 2011 and not knowing how.

Tell us about how you came up with the idea of Axie Infinity, from art design to core concept.

Axie is a vessel to introduce everyday people to blockchain through something that's fun, relatable, and nostalgic. Axie came from the minds of two people, Trung and Masamune- the original 2 founders of Axie.

How did you initially get the ball rolling from concept to playable game?

We started from the art and added more functionality over time. First buying/selling, next breeding, then auto-battles. We then swapped the auto-battles for the live battles system that we have today. The core principle was to constantly work on adding more utility to the Axies over time.

We spoke to the community every step of the way and got constant feedback.

Who were the first people to realise you had something good here and backed you?

The original 200 or so participants of the Axie Origin sale are our earliest backers and will always have a special place in the Axie community.

Community is everything, Axie Infinity recently broke 300k followers on Twitter, tell us what it means to you to have such a large community behind your vision?

It's amazing to see the Axie nation expanding. The community does so much hard work evangelizing the game, creating content, etc. It's really a community-driven game.

What was the hardest part in getting Axie Infinity to the point its at now?

We all make sacrifices for Axie, neglecting friends and family. Aside from that, making sure the community stays tight-knit even as we scale and maintaining close relationships with my my friends from the community.

Can you tell our community what you think the main perks of blockchain tech in gaming are.

* Player-owned economies.
* Trust-less peer-peer transactions of game resources and assets.
* Access to financial services such as borrowing, lending, debit credit cards using only your in-game wallet.
* Tighter-knit community due to aligned incentives.

Do you think this will extend to console anytime soon?

Mobile is most important for us as it's the most accessible.

Can you explain the Play to Earn side of Axie, how exactly can people earn from this game?

Axie has a 100% player-owned, real money economy. Rather than selling game items or copies, the developers of the game focus on growing the player to player economy and take small fees to monetize. Axies are created by players using in-game resources (SLP & AXS) and sold to new/other players. You can think of Axie as a nation with a real economy. The holders of the AXS token are the government that receives tax revenues. The inventors/builders of the game, Sky Mavis, hold ~20% of all AXS tokens.

Please tell us more about Axie scholarships and the perks they offer to all involved.

Scholarships are programs where players or organizations with extra Axies lend them to those who cannot afford Axies. They will agree to a percentage of tokens to split between scholar and manager. The scholarship will share a QR code that allows the scholar to login and play without having ownership control of the Axie assets.

Do you have any advice to people on how to start here in Axie infinity?

Come hang out in Axie Discord!
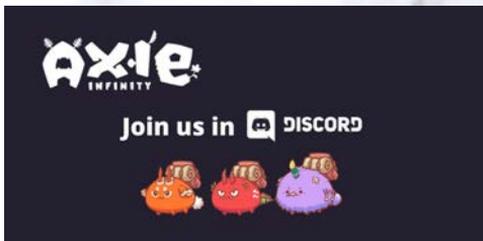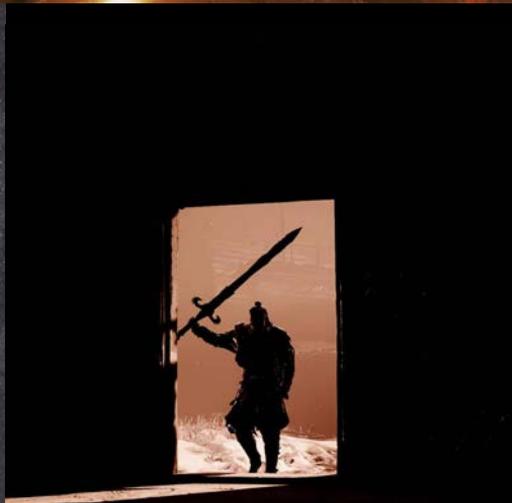
CAN WE GET A HEADS UP ABOUT YOUR PLANS WITH VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY & NFTS?

YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THIS MEANS TO US.

So basically, we've deployed an NFT standard that meets our platforms basic functional needs. NFTs, on-chain, consume RAM. This means that ram is still self-managed and external entities do not yet have access.

The next three months is us building out all that functionality, too. Allowing external entities to generate NFTs and for them to pay for the associated network resource (RAM).

Once that is unlocked, we can start allowing external entities to build on top of that, opening up huge amounts of functionality, including what you're talking about.

#TPMVALHALLA WINNERS

We want to thank you all for turning up in strength to the TPMValhalla contest! With over 700 entries in total, this has been our best response we've ever had for the eMag.

A special thank you goes out to Ubisoft for supplying TPM with the 3x season passes, and thank you to their teams for building these incredible worlds and tools for us to play and capture.

All your shots were amazing peeps! In an ideal world we would like to reward you all for your participation, but we could only choose 3. Make sure to drop them some love!

GIINGIIE

"I love this shot because it evokes strong emotions even at first glance. There is a certain kind of softness to it, which is in strong contrast with the setting and the theme of the game, and the use of DOF is the icing on the cake."

- neovandalizam

GAMEOGRAPHYOFF

<<>──○──<>>

"Not only does this shot capture one of the most iconic views of the south of England but for me it captures the atmosphere that most envision when thinking about the dark ages... Despair, darkness and ruin.

To capture that feeling and a beautiful view is truly impressive, well done."

- Virtualtourism

THEONLYJESS_VP

<<>──○──<>>

"A haunting shot complimented by great lighting and depth of field.

The light draws you to Eivor first, and having the bodies in the looming tree that dominates the shot out of focus suggests that the subject hasn't seen them either, or the trouble ahead. This is a great shot because it tells a story!"

- PoachiiN

_____

**Congratulations winners, we absolutely loved these shots and we'll be reaching out to you soon about the
season passes!**