

THE PHOTOMODE

E-MAGAZINE



HORIZON
FORBIDDEN WEST

VP&ME WITH
@JULES_VP

OUR PAGE IS YOUR STAGE

THIS IS OUR MOTTO HERE AT TPM, WE DEDICATE OUR PAGES TO YOU THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY.

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.

IF YOU LIKE ONE OF THE FEATURED ARTISTS WITHIN THE MAG SIMPLY CLICK THE FEATURED IMAGE AND IT WILL TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THEIR TWITTER PROFILE SO YOU CAN SHOW THEM SOME SUPPORT.

OUR GOALS

TO SUPPORT ARTISTIC MINDS AND DIGITAL CREATORS BY GIVING A GLIMPSE INTO THE PERSONALITIES BEHIND THE WORK, AND HELPING PEOPLE TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

TO CONNECT THE COMMUNITY WITH DEVELOPERS OF THEIR FAVOURITE GAMES WITH EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS AND CONTENT.

MEET THE TEAM



JACK/VIRTUAL TOURISM -
COMMUNITY MANAGER



MIK/THEFOURTHFOCUS -
CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR

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ONCE A DAY.

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HORIZON
FORBIDDEN WEST
REVIEW

HORIZON FORBIDDEN WEST REVIEW

Horizon Zero Dawn was arguably one of the main catalysts for the surge in popularity of photo modes and the SHARE button on PS4, with Aloy becoming an inspirational favourite amongst creative players and fans. Forbidden West then, is not only a follow-up to Guerrilla's much loved game, it is also an important sequel to their photo mode as well.

An incredibly rich new open world feels densely populated with new tribes, menacing enemies, more weapons & abilities, and of course some fascinating new machines that all add fresh opportunities. With only a few changes to the photo mode though, it feels like the emphasis here has been on enabling fans to continue photographing their favourite heroine rather than advancing the medium.



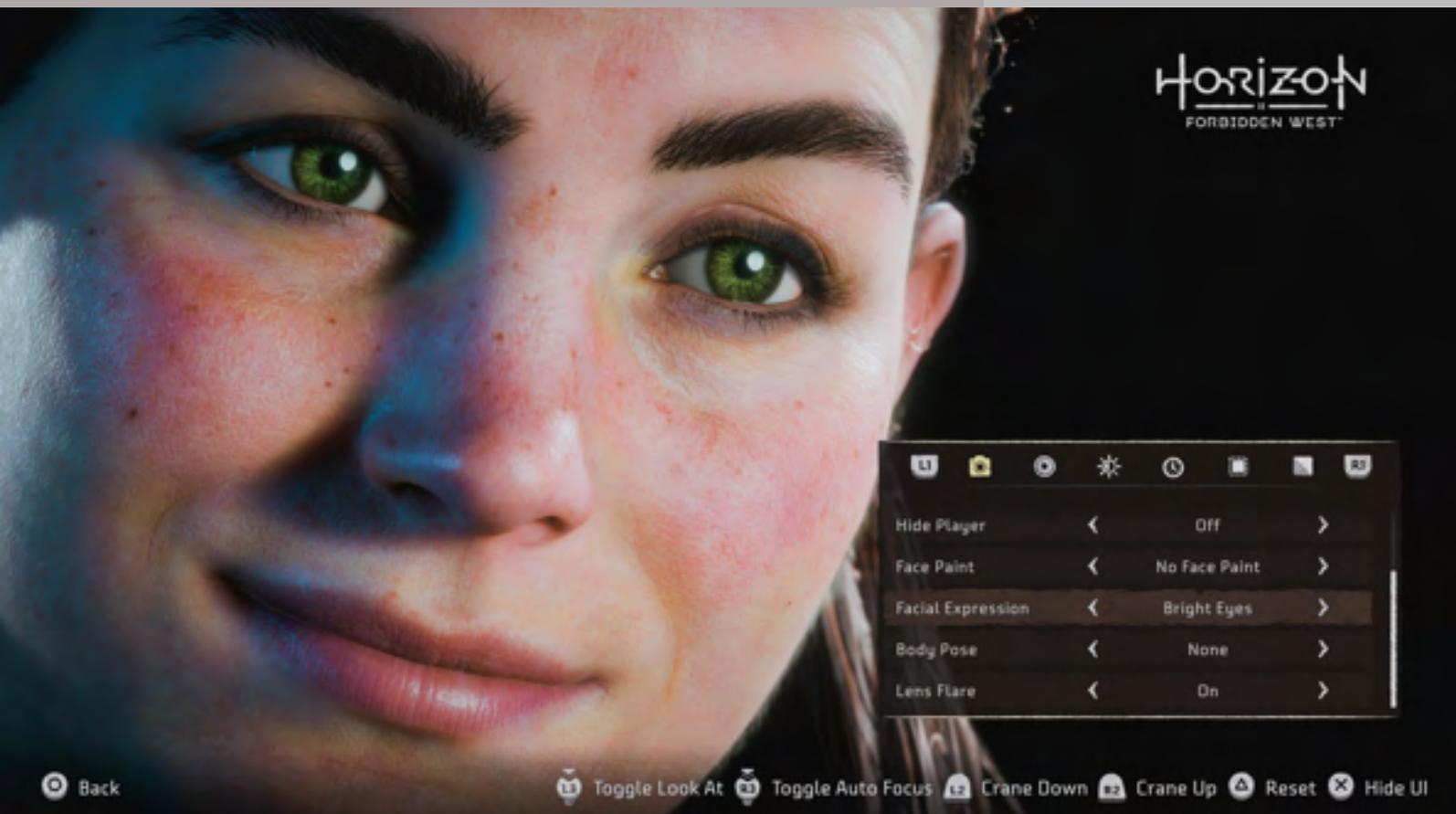
KEY PHOTO MODE FEATURES:

- FREE CAMERA WITH DOF CONTROL
- TOGGLE LOOK AT CAMERA
- TIME OF DAY WITH TIME LAPS



CONTROLS & IMPLEMENTATION:

Tucked away in the Options menu, the Forbidden West photo mode is still not the quickest to reach, but it remains very intuitive to use with a tabbed UI that is inherited from its predecessor and free camera positioning handled using the LS & RS with vertical craning on the L2 / R2 triggers. Close-ups and portraits are aided by an optional Precision Mode for refined inputs and the excellent L3 toggle to make Aloy turn to the camera, but the not-quite-90° roll remains untouched despite needing some improvement.



Perhaps the biggest area of adjustment from a user's perspective will be the decision to switch the field of view slider to a selection of fixed lens focal lengths; think of it like having a virtual camera bag containing just fixed prime lenses rather than one all-purpose zoom. Initially launching with just 7 lens options which left some awkward gaps, this has since been expanded to a much more balanced 23 which combine with the still modest 10m camera range to let you shift the emphasis onto the size of the machines during combat but is still not quite enough to pull back for wide environmental scenes.



Depth of field is handled elegantly though, with a foreground and background defocus rendered at wide aperture settings, and a central auto focus option that performs a quick "hunt" for the optimal sharpness on any subject. A decent set of colour filters and some useful 2.35:1 & 1:1 crops let you enhance your shots, though the greatest influence on the final image comes from how the photo mode handles lighting.



A general *Brightness* slider offers the chance to lift the whole image, and *Over Exposure* boosts highlights for greater contrast, but it is the fully simulated time of day (now with handy time lapse function for videographers) that continues to have the most profound effect on the type and direction of the natural lighting.

Things don't quite end there though. On PS5 at least, the same lighting elements that the studio apply to the superlative cinematic cutscenes are also used during live gameplay. Although there is some degree of unpredictability on exactly what kind of lights will shine on the characters, and no user control via the photo mode, the potential here is outstanding and I certainly know what I would like to see added in future updates!



PHOTOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITY:

The fact that shots of Aloy are still shared in great volume, even 5 years later, is a testament to how well the fiery-haired huntress resonated with fans, so it seems only right that this should continue. Between Ashly Burch's performance and exquisite details like "peach fuzz" hairs on her face (PS5 only), Aloy remains a hugely relatable character on-screen and an ideal photographic subject, especially given the interesting new outfits with colours that can be customised by visiting various dye merchants spread throughout the settlements.

The appeal is not just limited to the lead though, as the story brings back existing companions and introduces plenty of new ones, all portrayed with engaging acting and animation that will inspire you to hunt for elusive chances to capture their individual personalities in intimate detail.



Everywhere you look, the Forbidden West is a world full of interesting subjects and rich detail with astounding beauty and noticeable verticality as you roam through each localised biome under dynamically shifting lighting and weather conditions. Each of the tribes that inhabit the land also tell a cultural tale simply with their presence, well imagined outfits and everyday artefacts that can be used to convey their unique ways of life. A huge shame then that, just as was the case in Horizon Zero Dawn, the photo mode camera movement is completely restricted in any of the populated zones.



Thankfully, no such limitations exist where the machines are involved as Horizon's iconic artificial life forms are back and looking better than ever with very tactile materials and intricate designs that really invite a closer look. The many new additions are easily amongst the highlights and let's not forget that Forbidden West also sees Aloy take to the skies and venture deep under water to help bring whole new perspectives to the game and take your ideas in completely different directions.





VERDICT:

Horizon Forbidden West manages to build on its predecessor with improved visuals, lighting, storytelling and thriving activity of its new open world, all delivered with higher fidelity and more polish. By design, the camera tools enable the popular lead to be easily captured with staggering realism, and there is still a lot of unique appeal here, but a few critical limitations restrict what could be a much wider photographic scope.

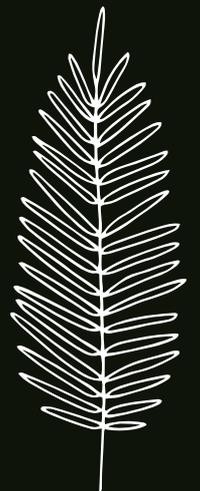
This is a photo mode that will serve fans well, but it could still be so much more. Still, as a game that offers more of everything that made Zero Dawn so appealing to virtual photographers, the very fact that this is a whole new adventure ready to be shot in glorious levels of detail is more than enough reason to follow Aloy into the wilds with a virtual camera.



THIS REVIEW EXCERPT WAS PROVIDED BY [THEFOURTHFOCUS.COM](https://thefourthfocus.com); SUBSCRIBE TO THE REGULAR [VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY NEWSLETTER](#) FOR ALL THE LATEST FEATURES AND UPDATES

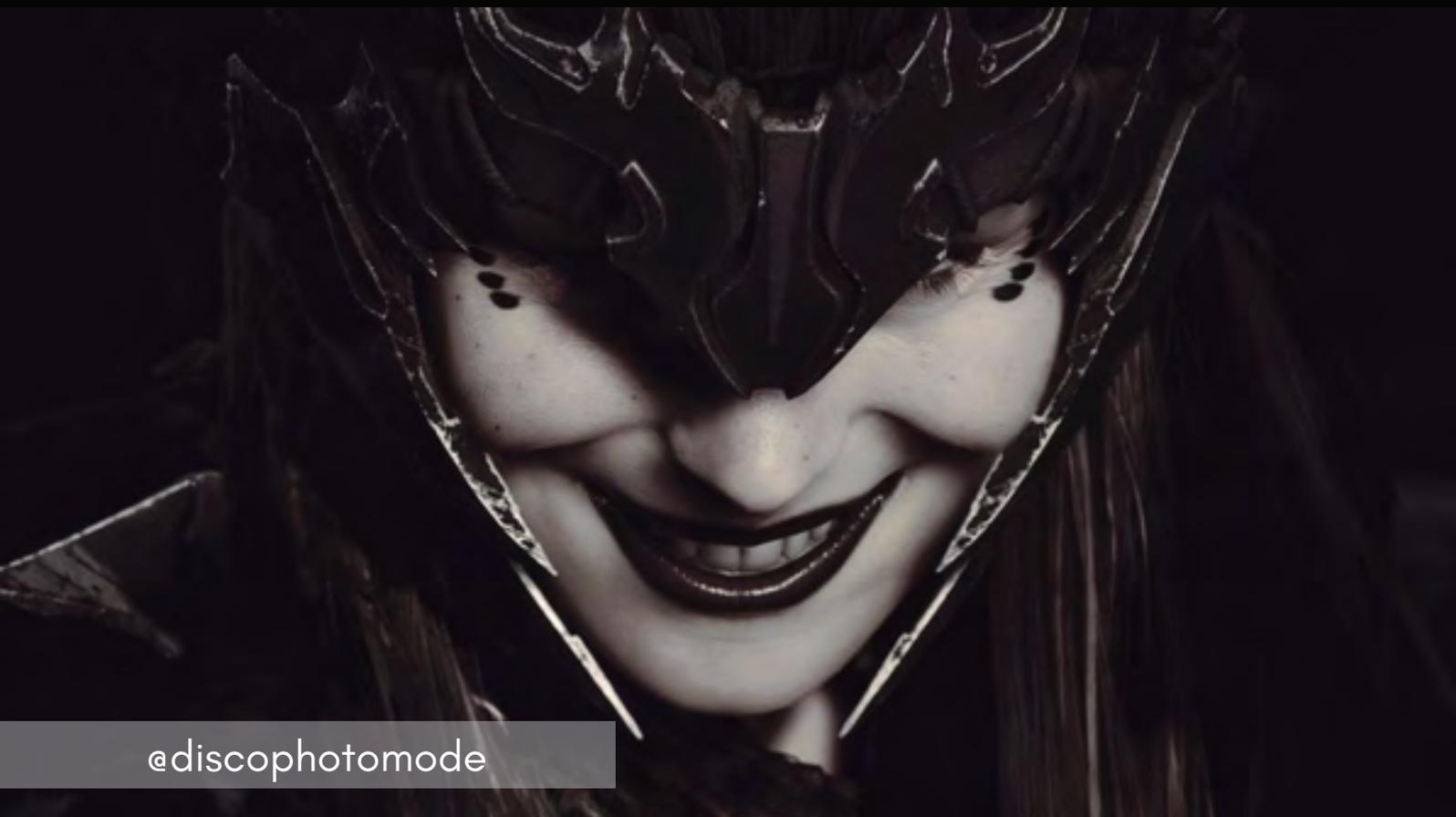


ТРМНFW





@ginoza_extended



@discophotomode



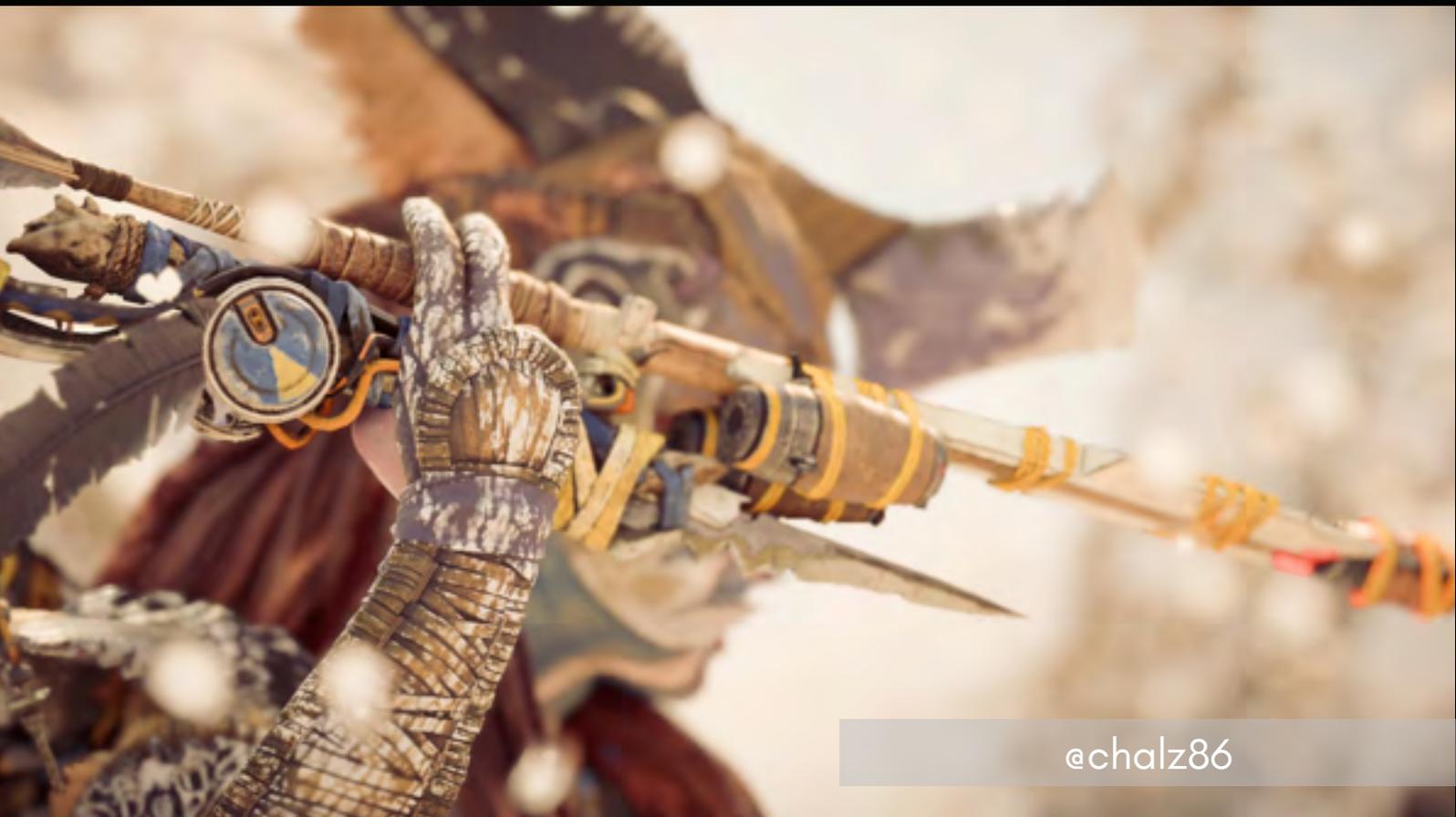
@art_ofthegame



HazHELLOv

I must confess I have a weakness for female character with lovely long hair. So, with Aloy, when I am exploring the Forbidden West, I am attentive to each moment her hair is blown away, watching closely the perfect moment to immortalize. This shot is one of this perfect moment. Aloy was only opening up a metal flower. I have paused the game and turned around the camera all around Aloy to find the perfect angle, and voilà!

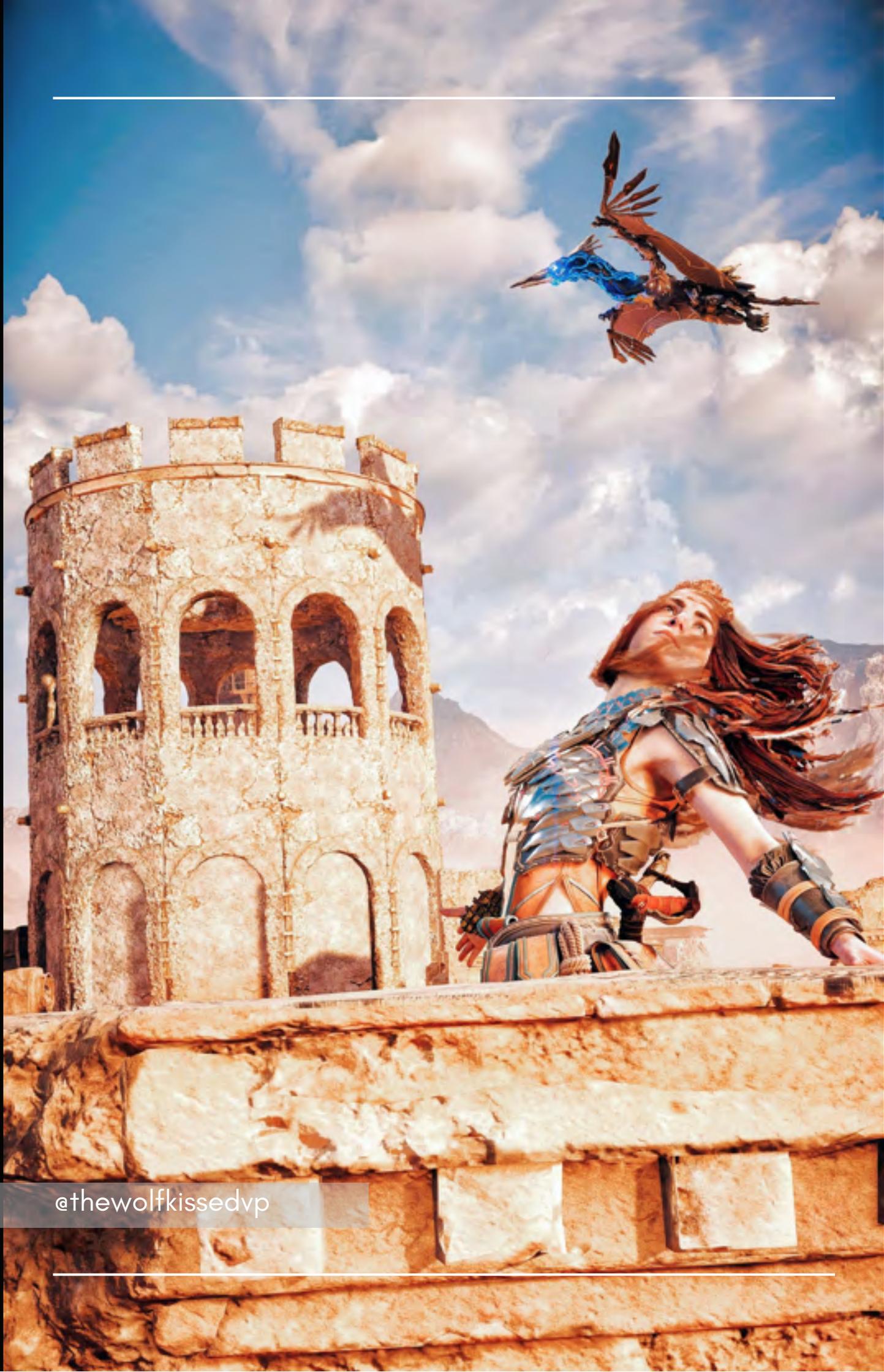
- [@HazHELLOv](https://www.instagram.com/HazHELLOv)



@chalz86



@chalz86



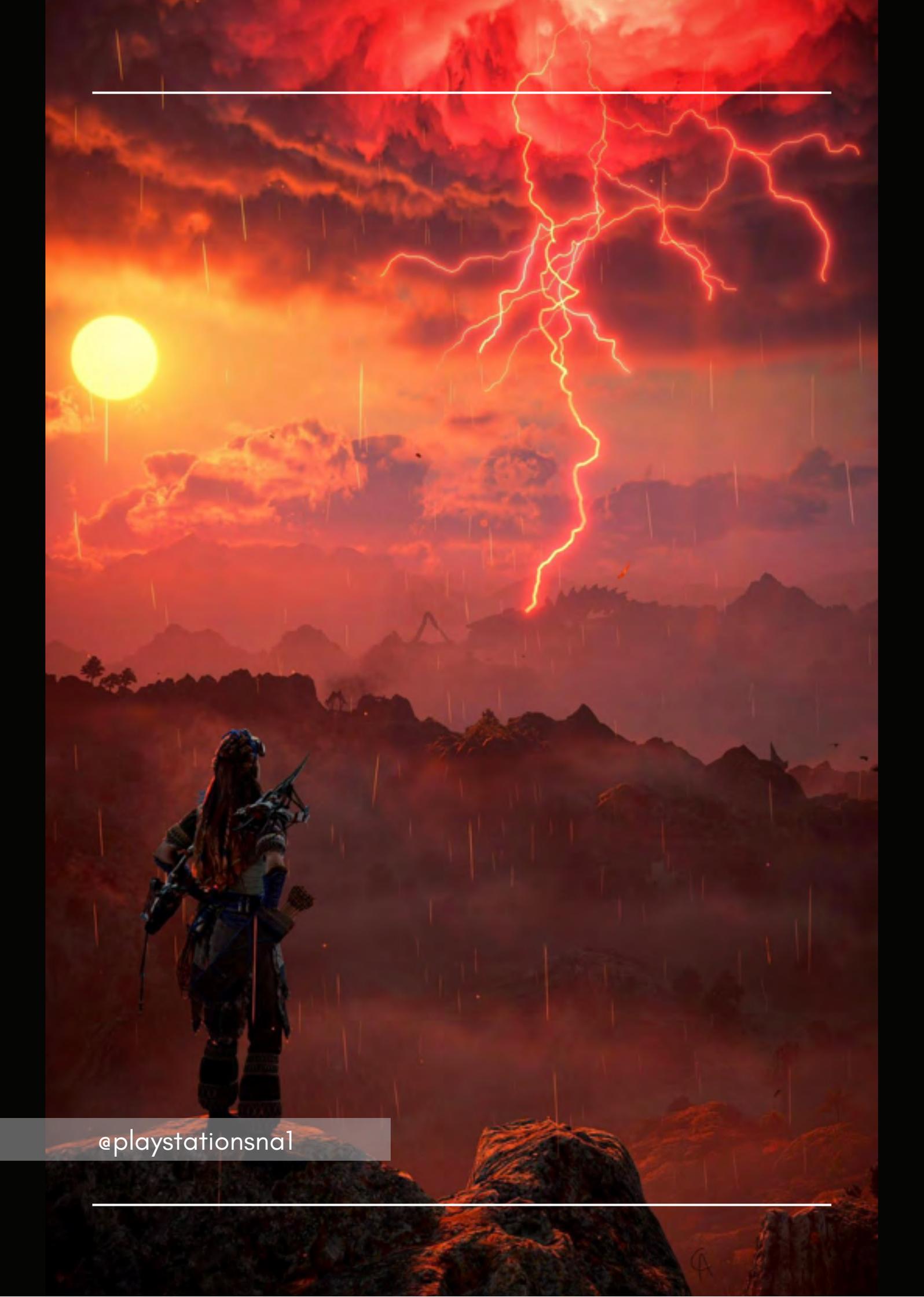
@thewolfkissedvp



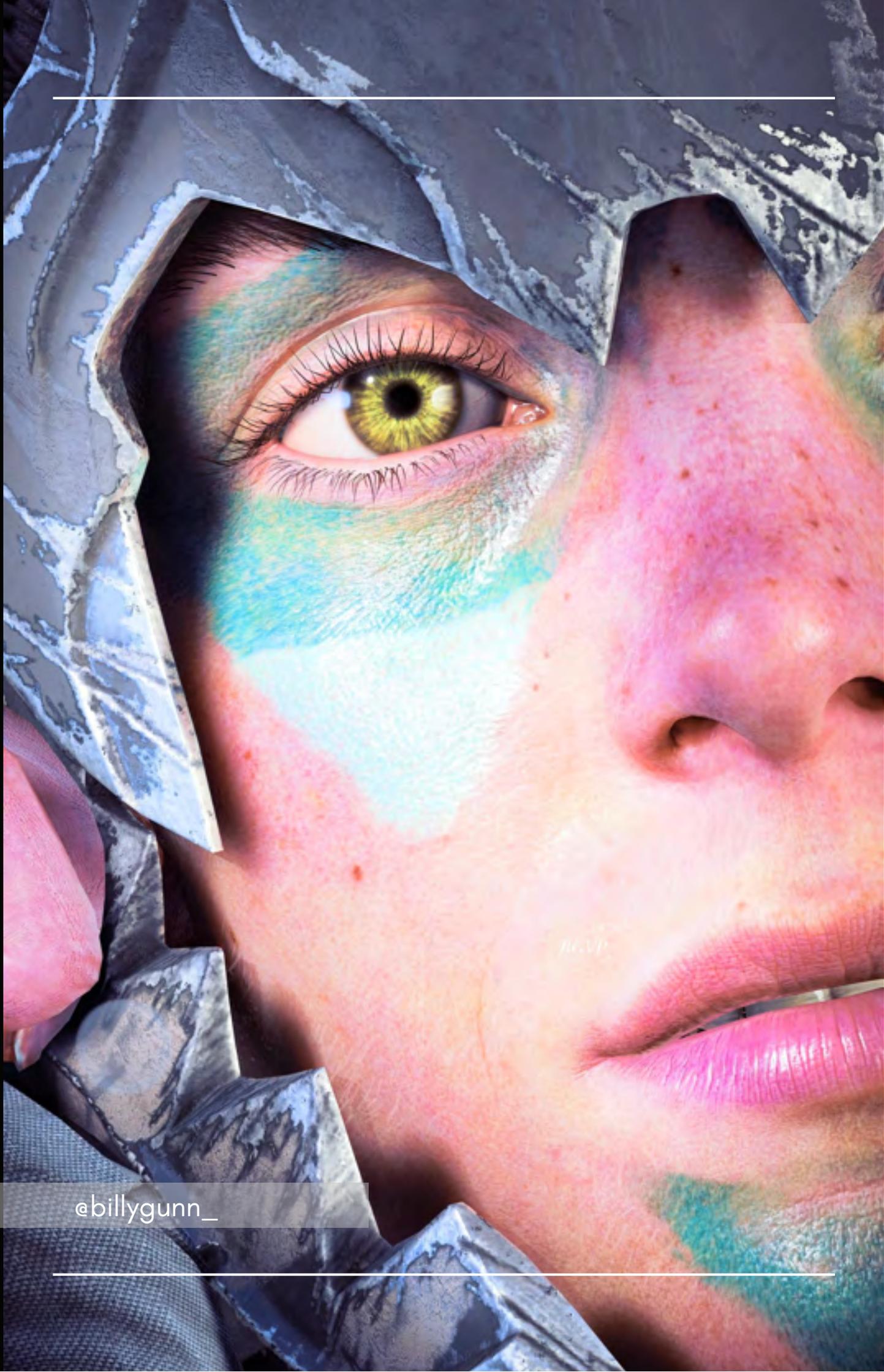
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@theworldsof1



@playstationsna1



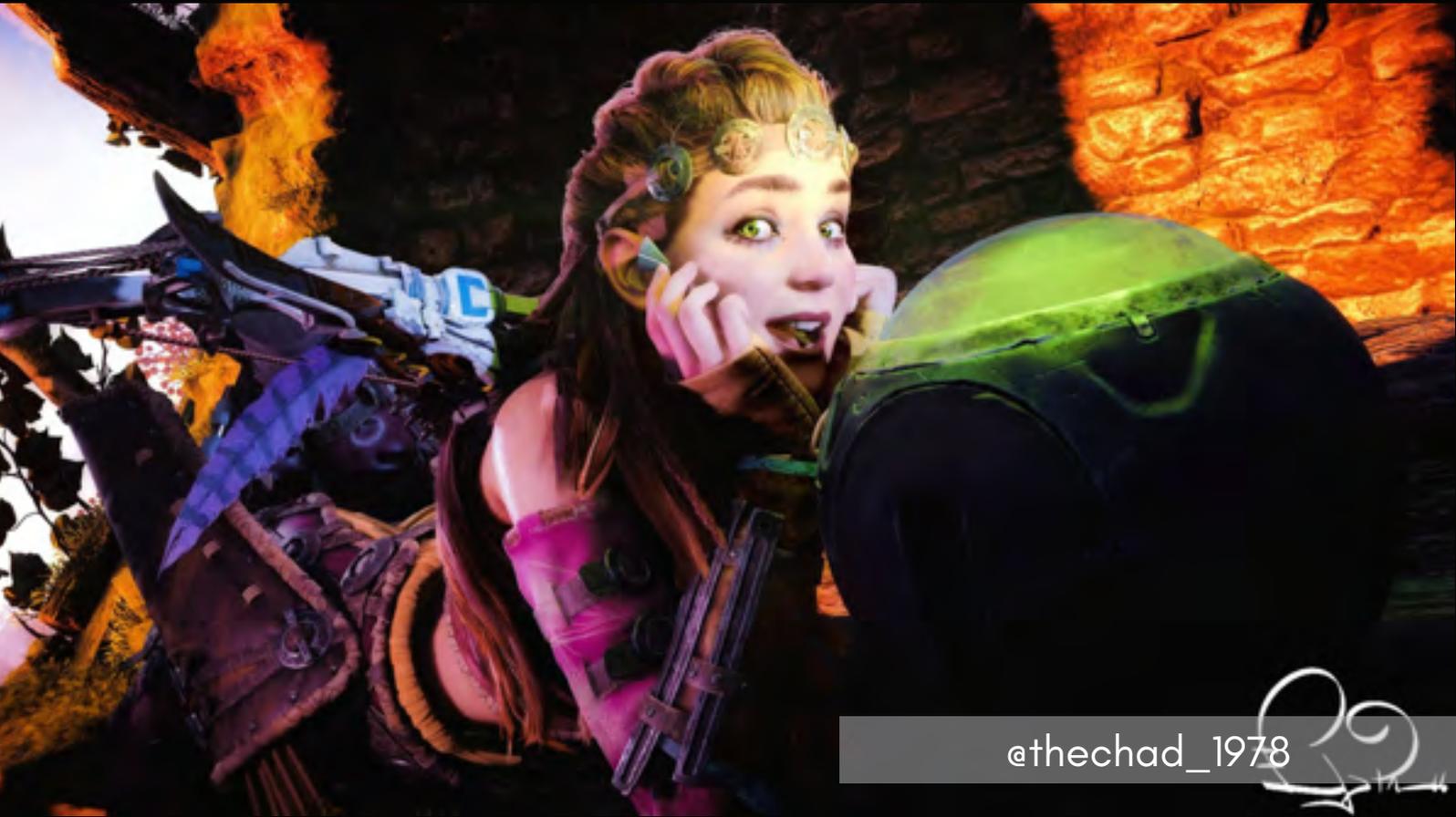
@billygunn_

R.V.P

I had spent 3 long days in Cauldron MU and really started to feel like some sort of Metal Tomb Raider and wanted to capture that feeling as a shot and that's when I saw this single beam of light shining down in the darkness and just knew I had found the perfect spot for the shot I wanted.

- [@kira zita](#)





@thechad_1978



@photodepurist



@vrphotogames



@natriumiushi



@petanni_



@photoingame



Her true face is fascinating. I feel her as a person, not as everyone expects her to be. I just don't know what she is thinking at that moment. This picture was taken on the beach on a beautiful sunny day. Perhaps seeing the calm sea released her tensed mind for a short time.

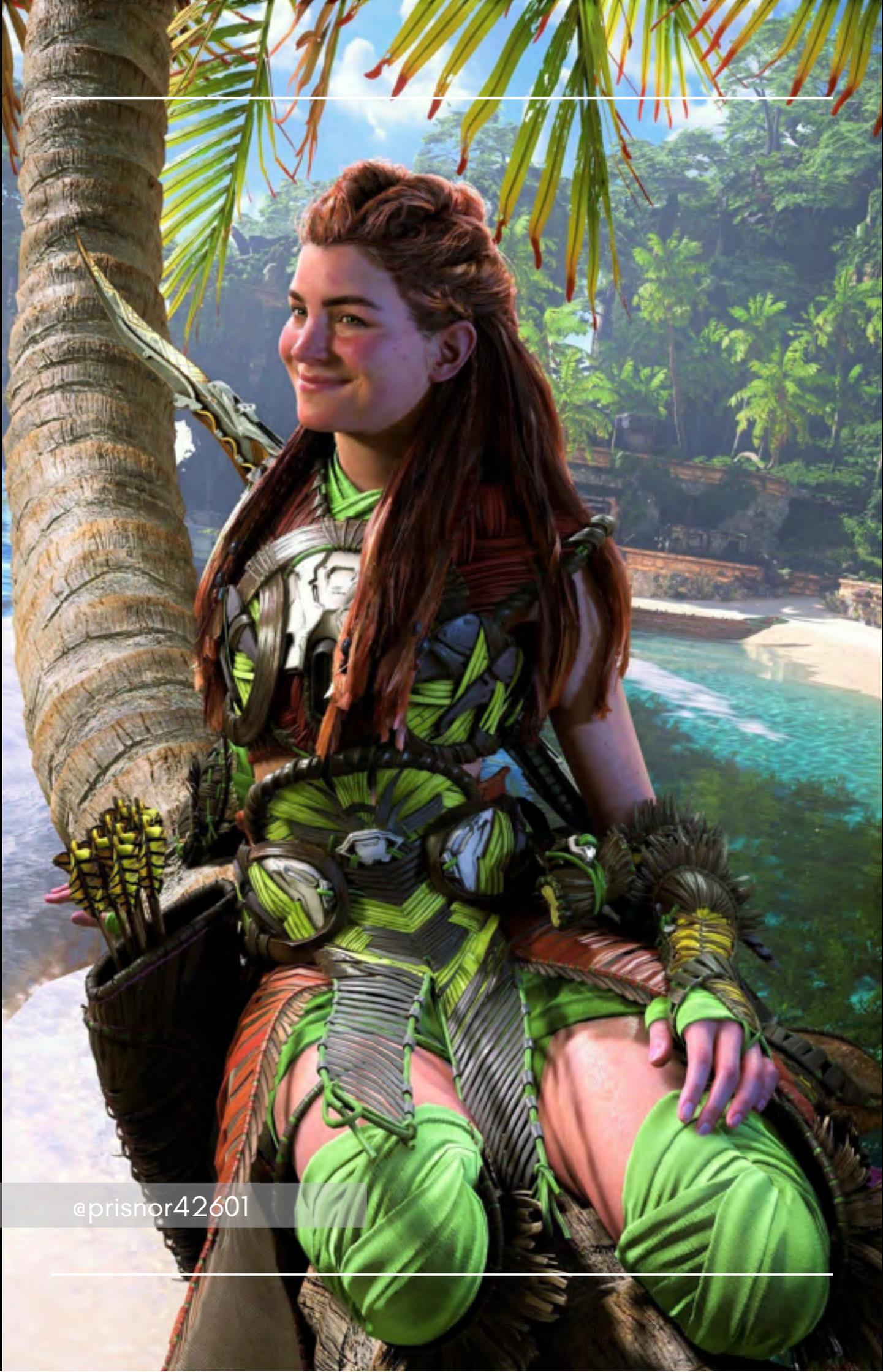
- [@9b75](#)



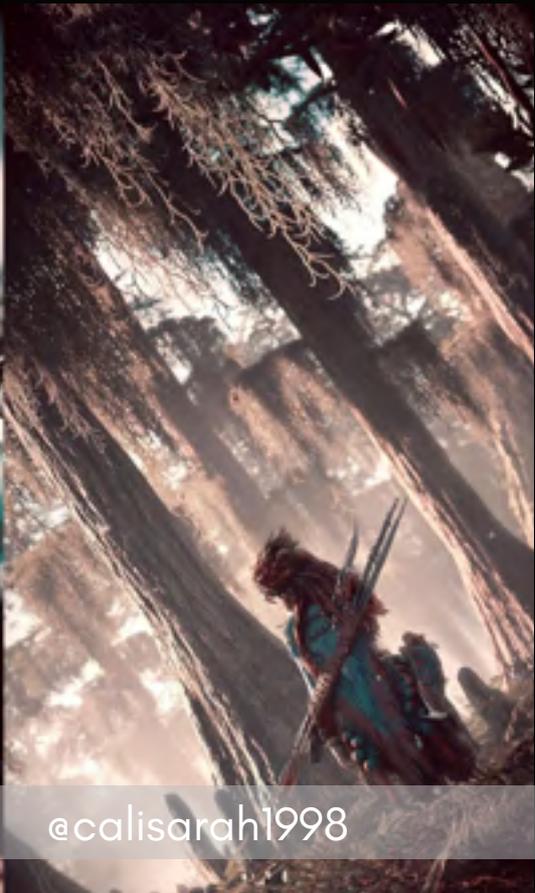
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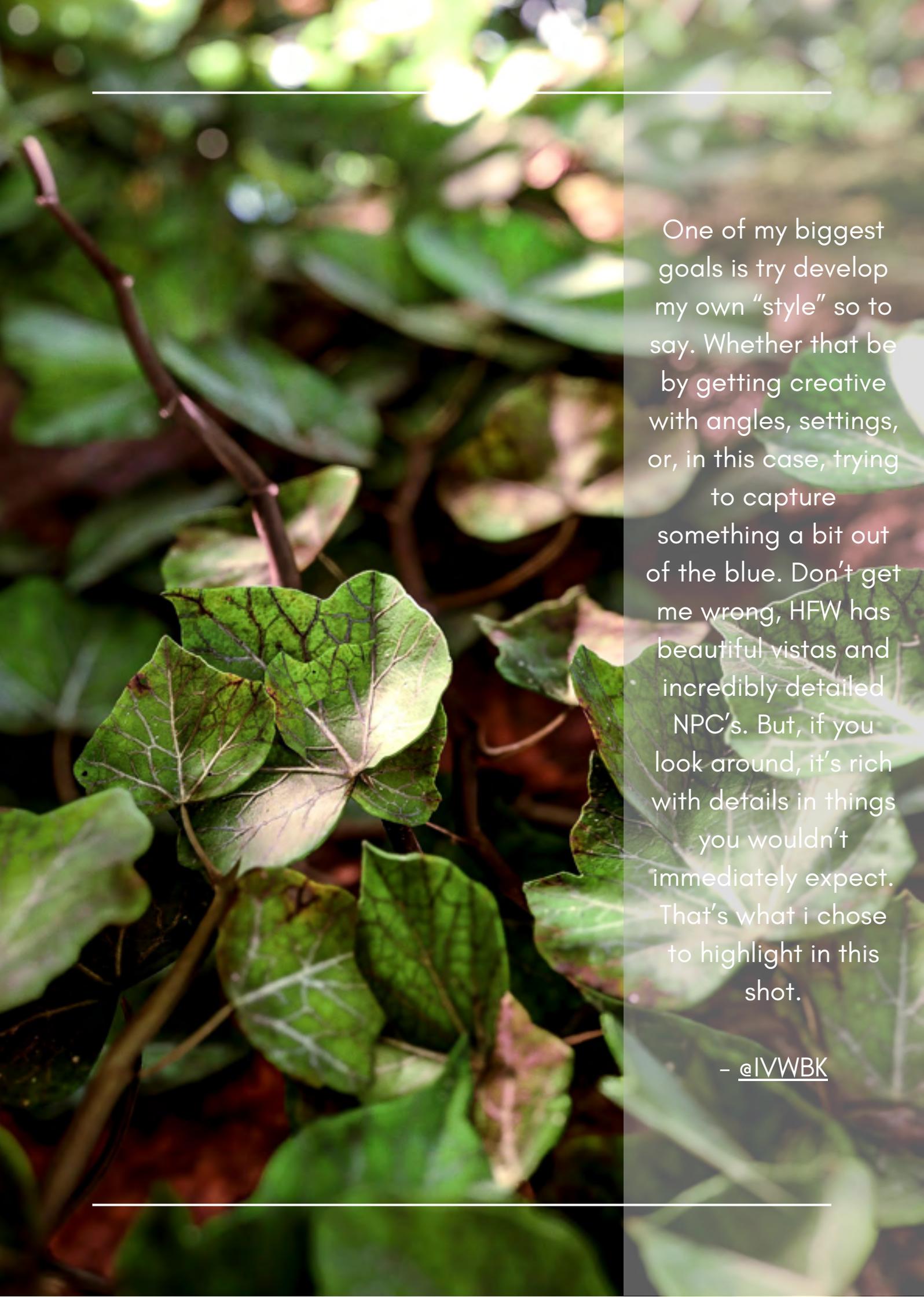


@amianan_niragub

WIKI
RESEARCH

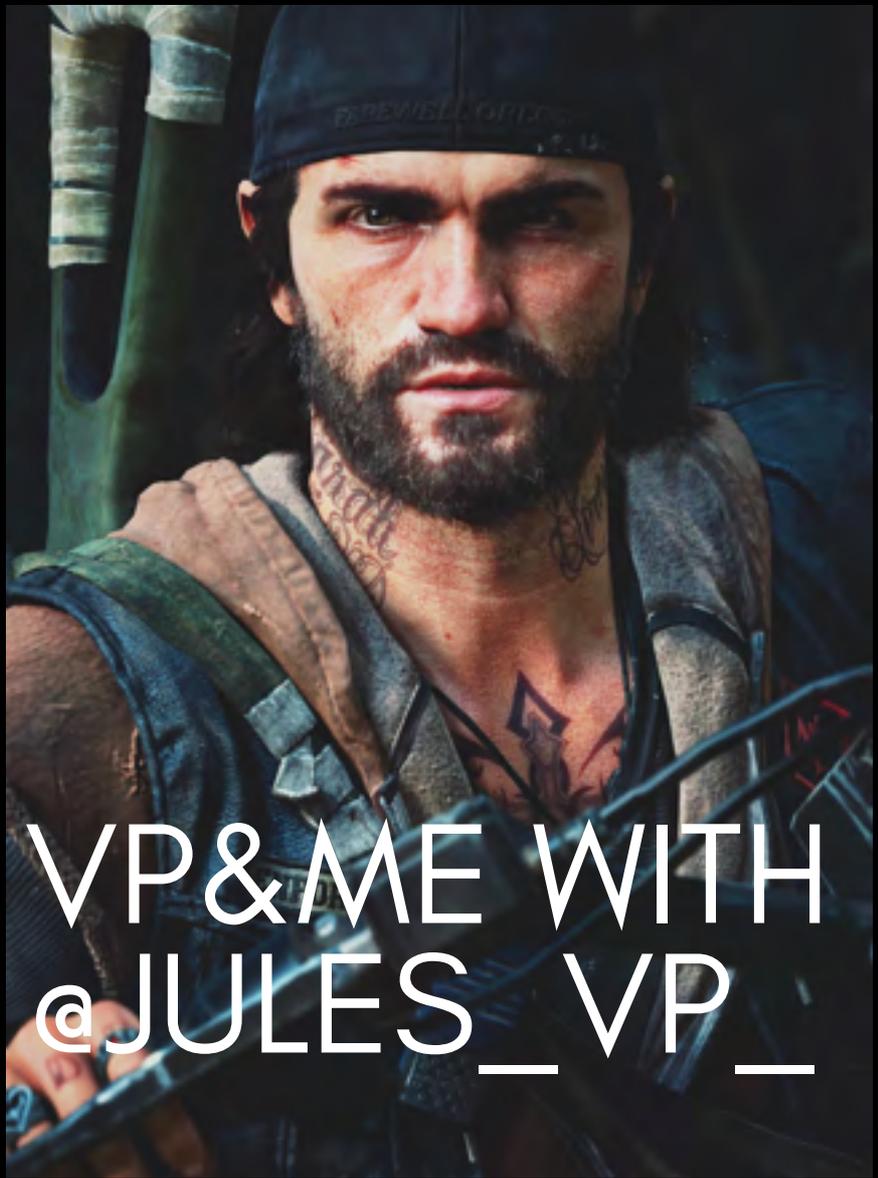


@pinkp0ppy



One of my biggest goals is try develop my own "style" so to say. Whether that be by getting creative with angles, settings, or, in this case, trying to capture something a bit out of the blue. Don't get me wrong, HFW has beautiful vistas and incredibly detailed NPC's. But, if you look around, it's rich with details in things you wouldn't immediately expect. That's what i chose to highlight in this shot.

- [@IVWBK](#)



WHAT WAS THE GAME THAT FIRST GOT YOU INTERESTED IN VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND DO YOU STILL GO BACK TO IT?

I guess the first game that really got me hooked on virtual photography was Horizon Zero Dawn. I was so excited when they showcased the photomode during a stream prior to release, it was like being a kid again. I've always been the kind of person who would just grab screenshots of my favorite moments in games, but they always lacked the proper tools to take real pics. With the recent release of Horizon Forbidden West I never really had to say goodbye to Aloy or this game world. I just love photographing this series so much.



WHO IN THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY INSPIRES YOU AND WHY?

There are so many people who inspire me on a daily basis. It is a crazy talented community and the creativity shown knows no end. I also take big inspiration from the themes and challenges hosted by our great community pages. I take a good look through the participation of other Virtual Photographers with great interest and their views and interpretation of a particular theme, definitely fascinates me. Especially when it is a theme I am not overly familiar with or one I don't consider as a strength of mine. I have definitely learned a lot this way.



IN YOUR OPINION WHAT GAME DO YOU THINK HAS THE BEST PHOTOMODE AND IS IT ALSO YOUR FAVOURITE TO PHOTOGRAPH, OR DO YOU PREFER CAPTURING ANOTHER?

This is a hard question for me, as I think every photomode has things I like and dislike. But I certainly have favourites. As someone who focuses more on scenery, games like Horizon Zero Dawn and Ghost of Tsushima, especially with their day/night and weather systems. You can get a lot more variation with a single shot, using these tools, which I love. I also like the Assassins Creed PMs too, mainly because I think the DoF is one of the easiest to use for me.



Overall, I'd say that the most important to me on a photomode is the camera controls and range, as I can add anything else through post editing if necessary. I find this important to mention because I do think the post editing process is a big part of Virtual Photography, same as it would be with any real life photography.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR PEOPLE GETTING INTO VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY?

Definitely do not be too hard on yourself. To learn a craft needs time, patience and practice. The most important thing to remember is to have fun. Don't be afraid to take inspiration from others but also try to experiment with your own work and style. I also found it helpful to look up photography techniques and try to see how you could adapt them in a virtual world and never hesitate to ask for advice if needed, it's a very friendly community.



WHAT STYLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IS YOUR FAVOURITE TO CAPTURE IN GAME AND WHY?

I'm sure everybody knows by now that I love to capture scenery/environments. Whether in a representational way or some sort of concept art style. I just can't take my eyes off of these beautifully crafted worlds and want to share how I see them through my eyes and hopefully express some sort of emotion through them. It's my comfort style in Virtual Photography that I'd like to think I'm pretty good at.

Though I have started to do portrait photography a lot more recently, where I felt I needed a lot of practice and advice to get to the level that I am at now but there is always so much more to learn.



@gaminpixels



@danceswithvp



@pharaoh_35

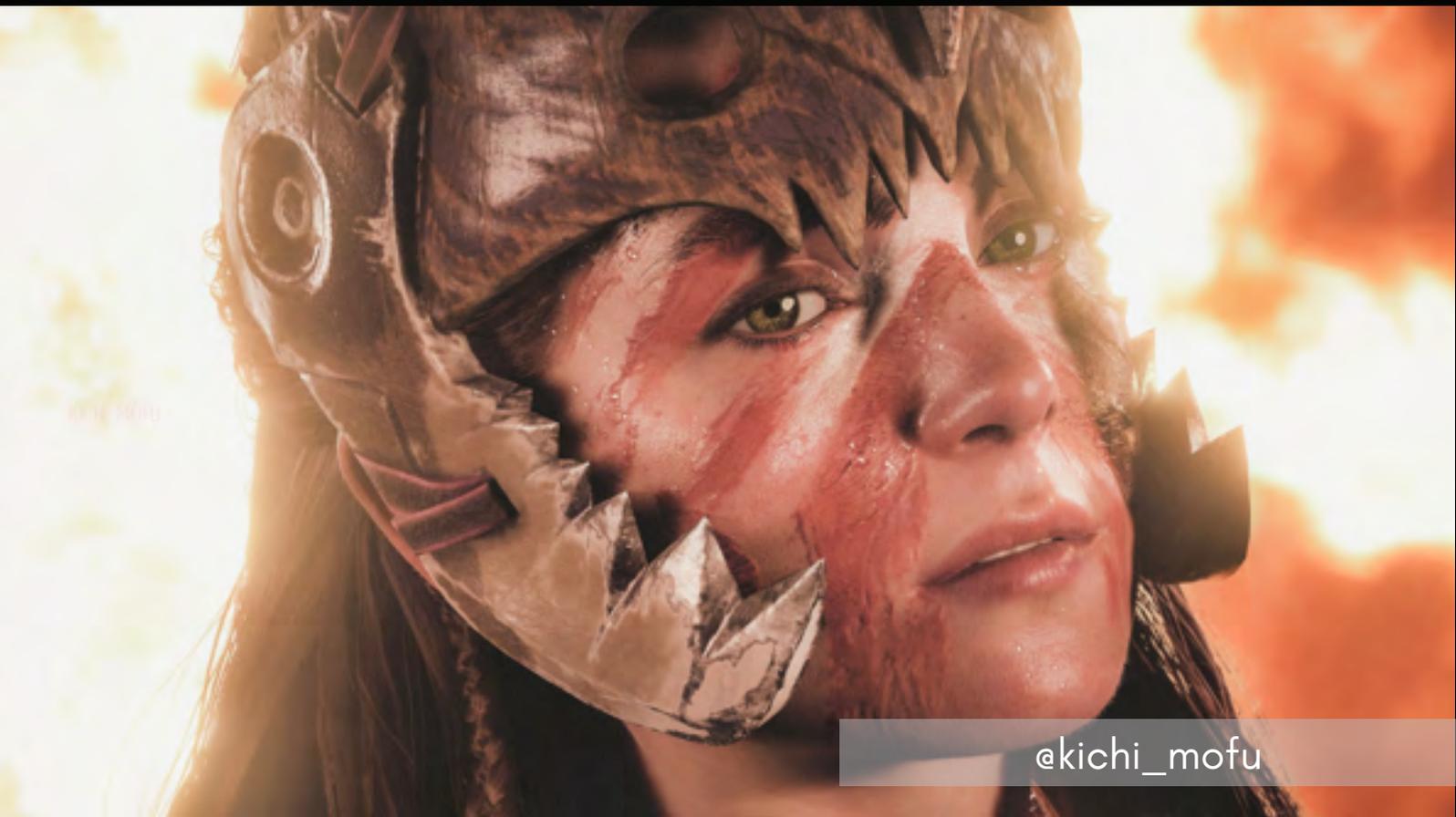


@wingsformiles



Invasion from "strangers" in any world is a threat. From her gaze, we can read fear, anger, and anxiety toward the enemy. At the same time, we can also sense a "longing for the unknown. Incidentally, this photo was originally intended to be horizontal, but I dared to make it vertical to give a sense of depth beyond her gaze. I hope to continue to enjoy VP with you all in the future. Thank you very much for publishing these photos. We look forward to working with you in the future.

- [@el_k_ma2um0](#)



@kichi_mofu



@keeneyeVP



[@nuka_bliss](#)



@schofey27



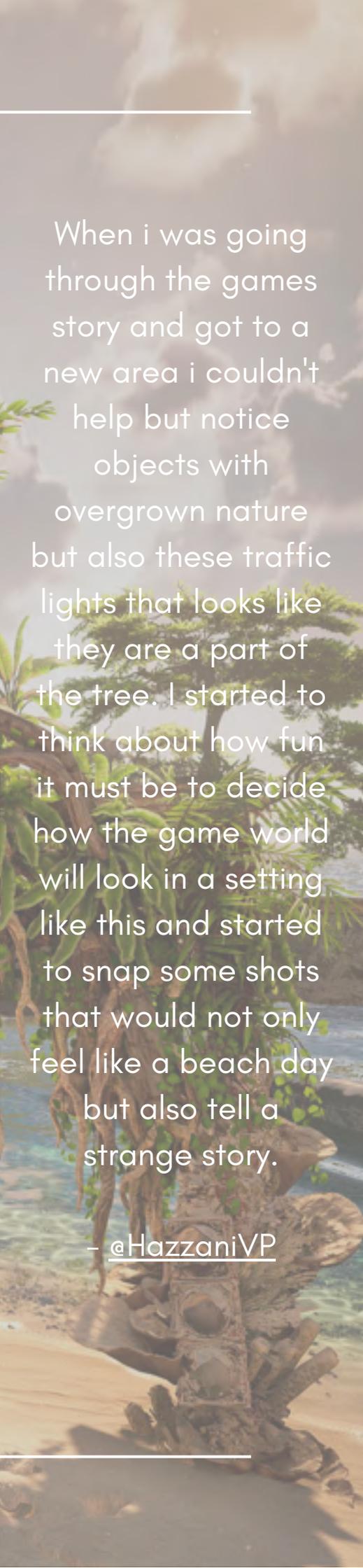
NIKO.VP

@itswanabLkeniko



When i was going through the games story and got to a new area i couldn't help but notice objects with overgrown nature but also these traffic lights that looks like they are a part of the tree. I started to think about how fun it must be to decide how the game world will look in a setting like this and started to snap some shots that would not only feel like a beach day but also tell a strange story.

- [@HazzaniVP](#)





HORIZON
"FORBIDDEN WEST"
H



@joyrider2525



@archiehanna3



@kingforever008



This capture of Aloy actually came about in a very chaotic way. I was suffering from a lack of inspiration at the time, struggling to find a subject organically or even using a more planned approach. Eventually I chose to focus on Aloy herself and highlight a specific outfit. However, outside of that I was completely indecisive on every aspect of the composition. After aimlessly switching outfits and opening and closing photomode with way too much thought, I was just about ready to switch off. Then the lighting hit in just the right way and the foliage surrounding Aloy really lent itself to the Utaru outfit and how in tune with nature the tribe is. I framed Aloy's eyes and Utaru paint, and it all finally clicked. Some may have reached this conclusion sooner, but for me it was a good example of discovering a good shot when you least expect it, and to also not try so hard if you feel burnt out. Start with a simple idea and let the games visuals guide you

- [@sidequestVP](#)



@sirevanztheduke



@massito54



@howieVP



@d0w0b_vp

@d0w0b_vp



@crisg_art

When I took this shot,
I wanted to
represent just how
menacing these
machines are. They
loom over the map
and remind you of
the horrors of the
past. I wanted to
capture the ominous
feeling I get when
I'm near one. Making
the shot darker
worked well to
communicate the
feeling.

- [@ccf_photomode](#)



