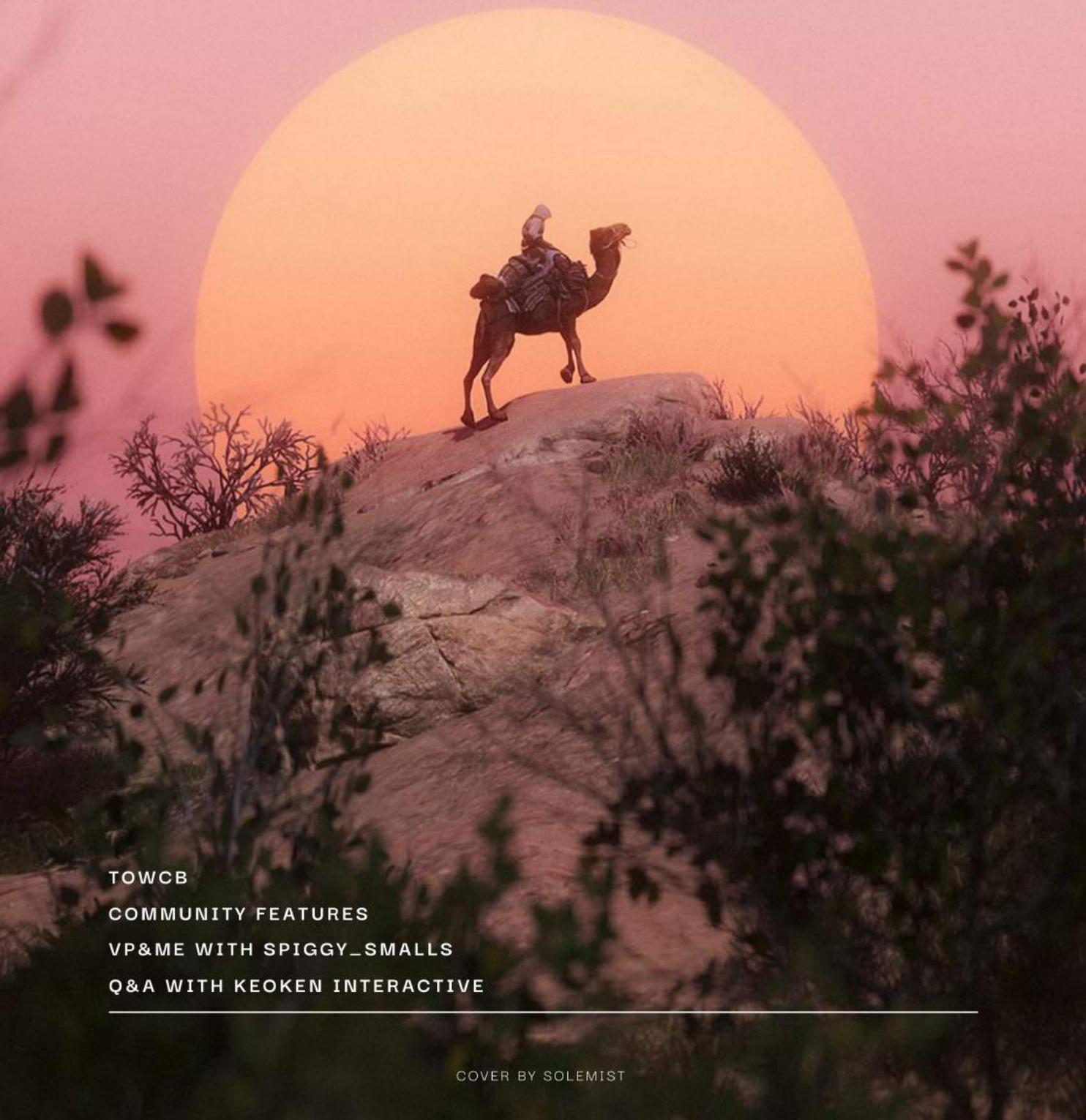


# THE PHOTOMODE

ISSUE 29



TOWCB

COMMUNITY FEATURES

VP&ME WITH SPIGGY\_SMALLS

Q&A WITH KEOKEN INTERACTIVE

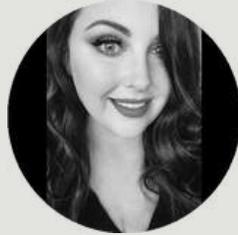
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COVER BY SOLEMIST

## MEET THE TEAM



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contributing author

## 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 love one of the featured artists within the mag simply click their work and it will take you directly to their Twitter profile so you can show them some support.

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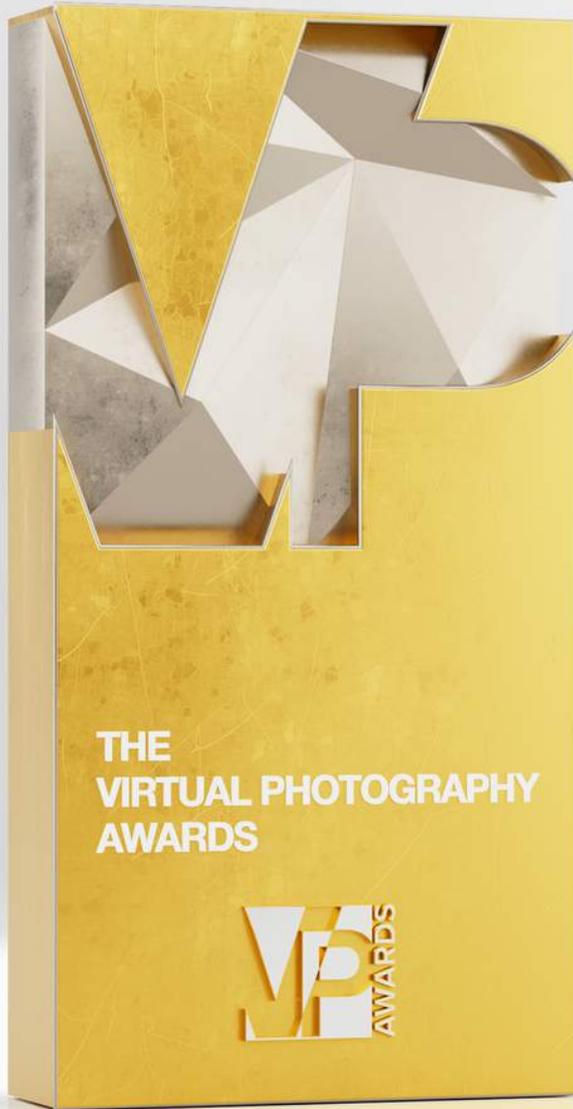
## Want to be featured?

Tag us or use #ThePhotoMode



# VP AWARDS THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2023

DECEMBER 14–31



Δ THE  
FOUR  
THFO  
by CUSD

VP AWARDS THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2023



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Its that time of year again! Time for The VP Awards! Hosted by thefourthfocus, now in its fourth year and bigger than ever. The VP Awards include gaming industry award categories and public entries to be crowned virtual photographer of the year. Head over to [thefourthfocus.com](https://thefourthfocus.com) to have your say and upload your work.

VP AWARDS THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2023



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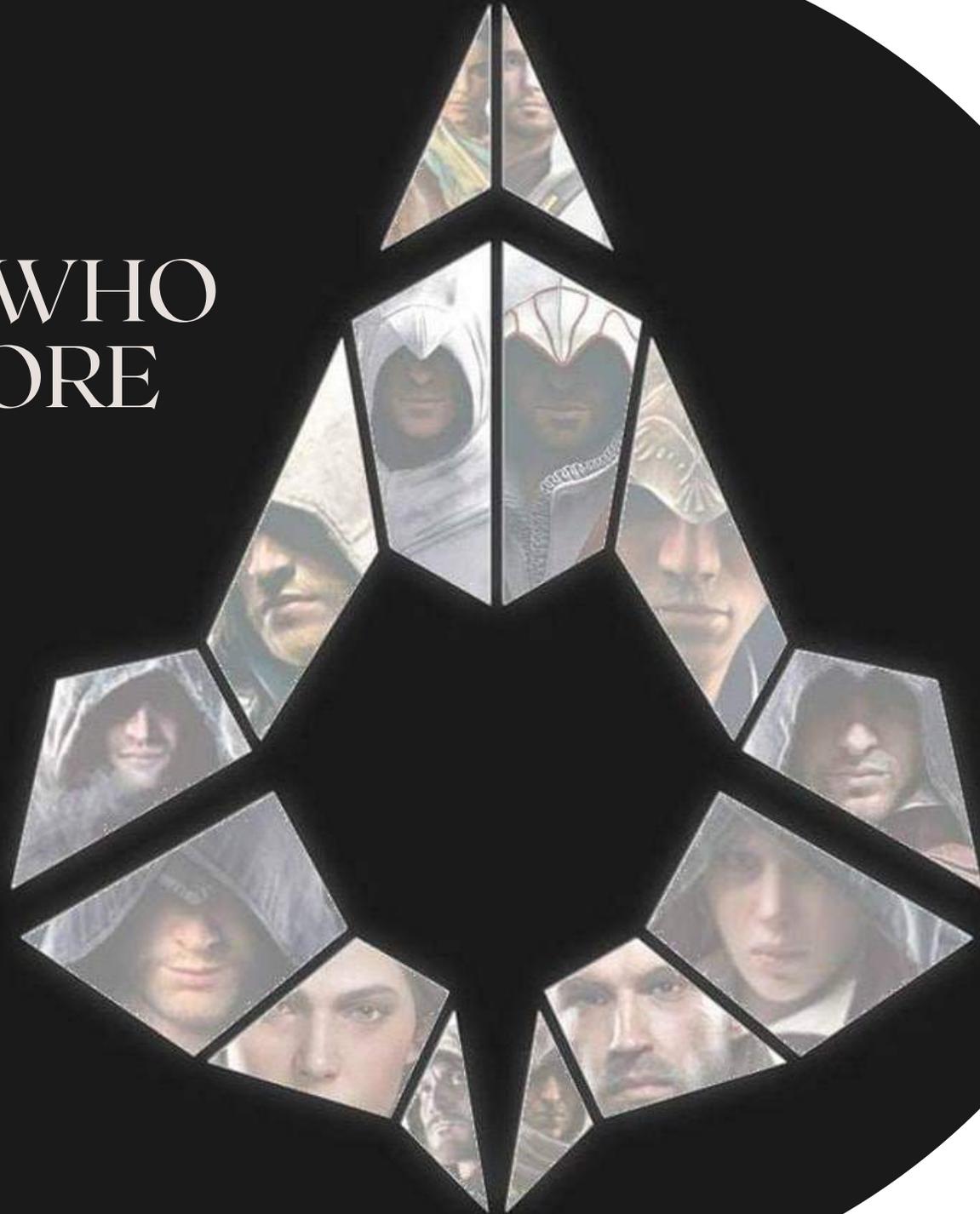
# THE ONES WHO CAME BEFORE

## VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY

The Ones Who Came Before VP Community is hosted by Aaron Young from The AC Partnership Program. Every week Aaron picks his top 5 favourite Assassin's Creed shots and showcases them on The Ones Who Came Before website as an article. The idea is to promote virtual photography and talented content creators within the community.

Aaron is a keen virtual photographer and loves to post his journey's through Assassin's Creed on Twitter. Keep an eye on the site as more weekly articles are added. You can participate either through tagging your shots to [#TOWCBWeeklyCapture](#) or by joining our Community.

This issue we'll be sharing Aarons top picks from the previous 8 weeks. Be sure to join the community [HERE](#), and to read all previous articles visit [theoneswhocamebefore.com](http://theoneswhocamebefore.com).



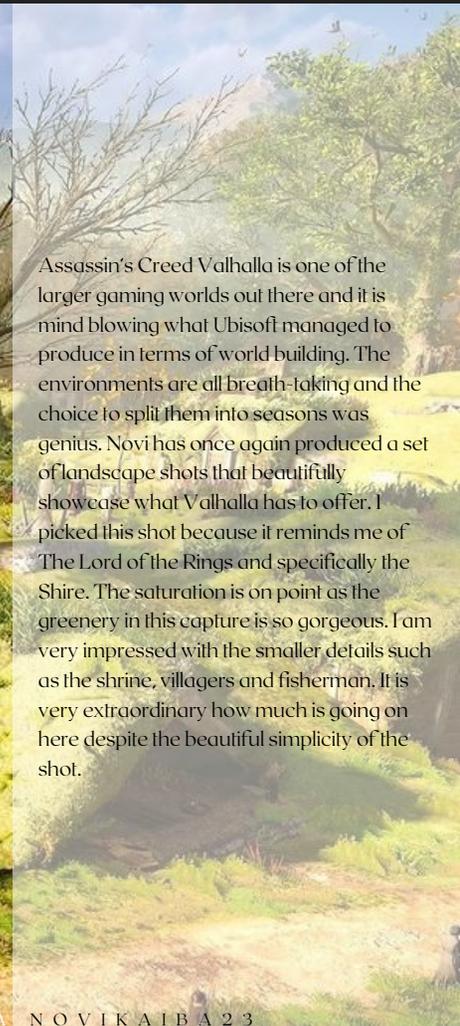


“YOU WANTED FIRE, WELL NOW YOU HAVE IT”

Due to the political pressure in Norway, Eivor sails to new lands. Once in England she finds that it isn't really any different, with both Saxon's and Danes fighting over who will rule. For a Viking Eivor is very composed and knows when she must adopt the dark for the good of her clan. This black and white capture truly exemplifies both sides of Eivor. The hood and the cloak representing the Creed, along with the elegant shadow across her face. Then there is the glow of the flames sprinkling over her head bring Eivor's scared face back into the light. The innocent flowers just in front of her also add a touch of light to balance this shot impeccably.

THEONLYJESS ASSASSINS CREED VALHALLA

theonlyjess



Assassin's Creed Valhalla is one of the larger gaming worlds out there and it is mind blowing what Ubisoft managed to produce in terms of world building. The environments are all breath-taking and the choice to split them into seasons was genius. Novi has once again produced a set of landscape shots that beautifully showcase what Valhalla has to offer. I picked this shot because it reminds me of The Lord of the Rings and specifically the Shire. The saturation is on point as the greenery in this capture is so gorgeous. I am very impressed with the smaller details such as the shrine, villagers and fisherman. It is very extraordinary how much is going on here despite the beautiful simplicity of the shot.

Assassin's Creed virtual photography can often excel in capturing the history of a location. Often character portraits rule but if you observe these masterfully created worlds you can see a lot is going on. This is one of the reasons the Discovery Tours have become so popular. This capture from Filip is a perfect example of the hard work that has gone into making Baghdad feel authentic. You could easily be forgiven for thinking this was a holiday snap. There is so much to love about this shot, the framing with the tree, the sunlight on the building and that elegant shadow of the bird cage on the wall. A perfect capture for the Baghdad theme.



ASSASSINS CREED MIRAGE COP\_FILIP



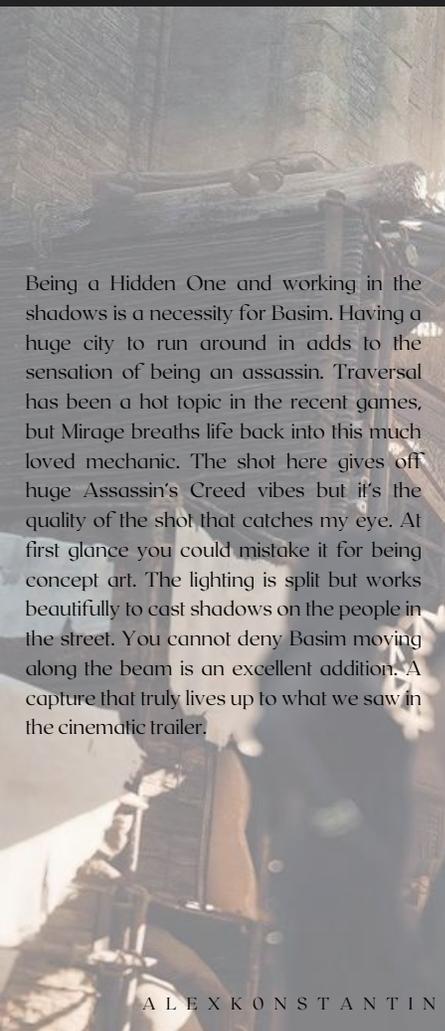
When I think of Basim there is one word that springs to mind, mysterious. His whole time in Assassin's Creed Valhalla is shrouded in mystery. Yet for the most part, our time with him in Mirage is also a cryptic affair. Basim is a compelling character and I have enjoyed my time exploring his origins. This shot sums up Basim's life, you can see he is conflicted here and in pain. The black background serves the shot well by highlighting his expression. The lighting is on point allowing you to only see one side of his face. Basim only wants you to see one side of him and this shot illustrates that beautifully.

"AN OCEAN LIES BEFORE US, EIVOR. AND ON ITS FAR SIDE, A NEW KINGDOM AWAITS"

Sigurd and Eivor's relationship with Styrbjorn weakens after he seeks peace with his enemies. They grow tired of his lack of ambition and set sail for England to find wealth and glory. Eivor believes this to be a simple plan but little did she know Sigurd is being manipulated by Basim in the background. For me this capture epitomises Valhalla and the fact it is a Viking game at heart. The Longship looks beautiful here with the colours a delight on the eye. The scenery and the water is breath-taking, it takes me back to that moment in the game. Excellent timing to get Sýnin in the shot too.

ASSASSINS CREED VALHALLA RENANVP\_ALT

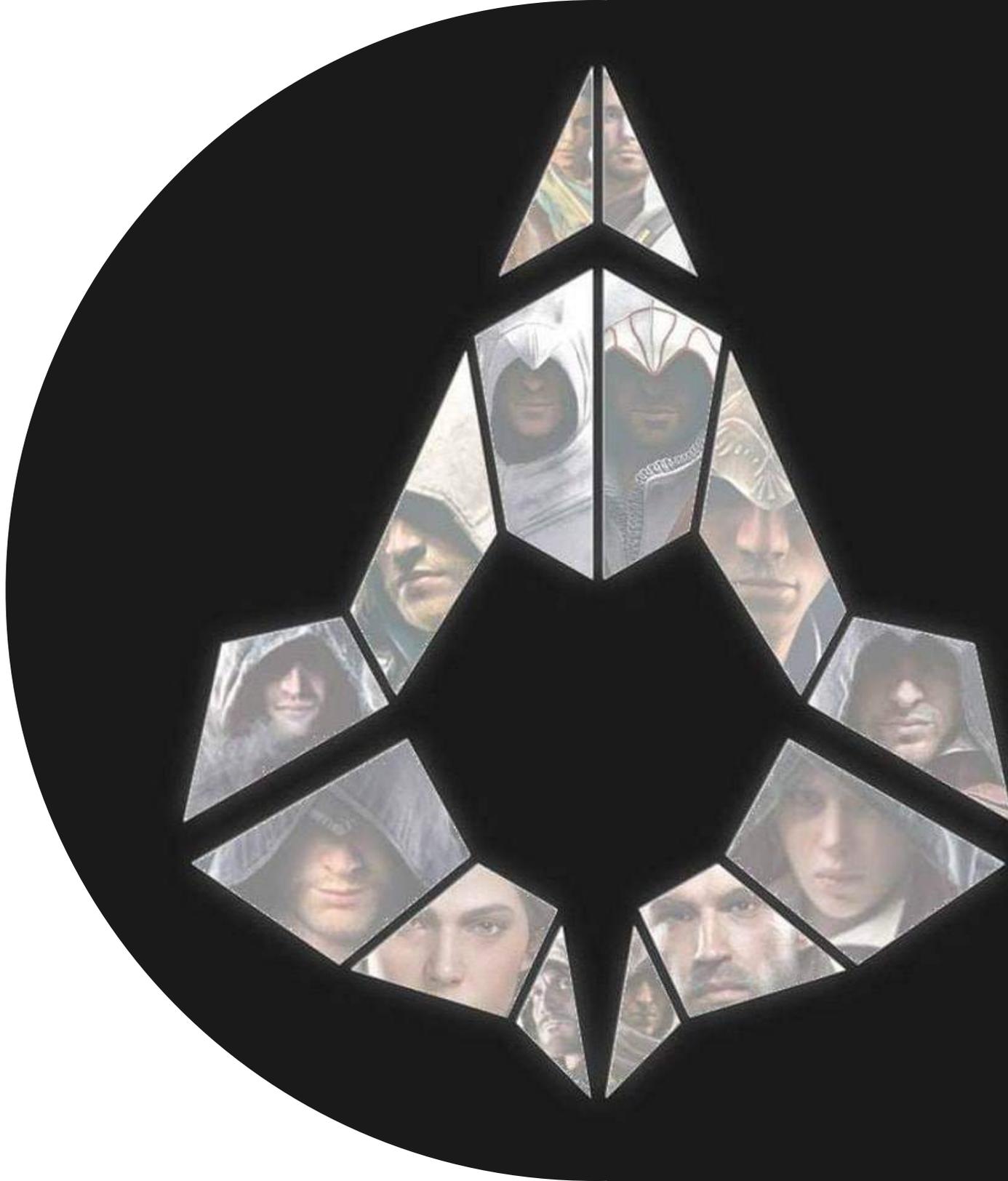




Being a Hidden One and working in the shadows is a necessity for Basim. Having a huge city to run around in adds to the sensation of being an assassin. Traversal has been a hot topic in the recent games, but Mirage breaths life back into this much loved mechanic. The shot here gives off huge Assassin's Creed vibes but it's the quality of the shot that catches my eye. At first glance you could mistake it for being concept art. The lighting is split but works beautifully to cast shadows on the people in the street. You cannot deny Basim moving along the beam is an excellent addition. A capture that truly lives up to what we saw in the cinematic trailer.



ALEXKONSTANTIN ASSASSINS CREED MIRAGE



THE  
ONES  
WHO  
CAME  
BEFORE



# TPM COMMUNITY FEATURES

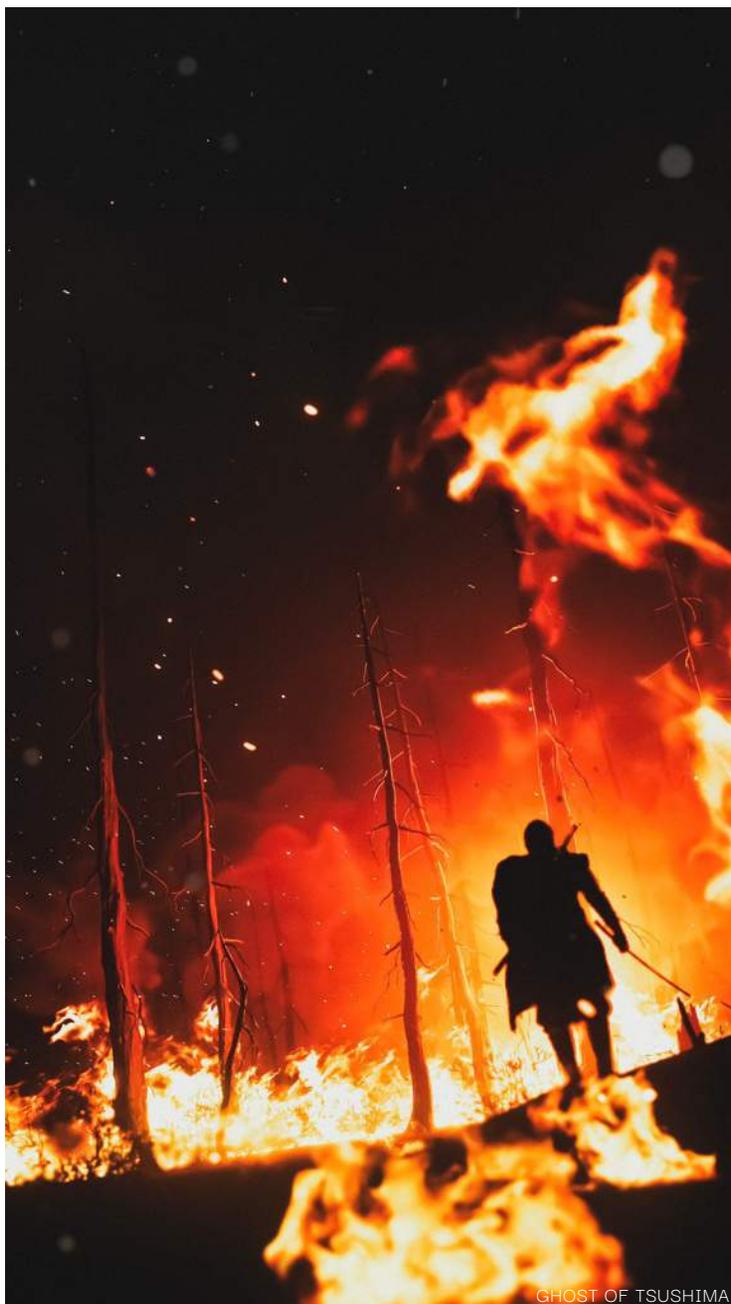
VP for me is the art and creation in my heart finally coming to life, that I was unable manifest through other means and media in the past. It's the visual representation of how I actually see the games I play. In some cases, what I would want to see from them. This image was a perfect example of that.

When I made this shot, it was part of a set that showcased Miles Morales's perseverance through the beginning of his monumental obstacles as a hero. You can sense that gritty feeling in this image through his wounds, tattered clothes, and the color mixing used. I wanted to be sure that I achieved this by having the shot be very close and personal. Even cutting parts of the body in the image from being seen. Making the focus to be the portions I mentioned earlier and bringing out the intensity of the photo.

A quote I used from the game for this set encapsulates all of that. The Tinkerer asked him: "Why do you keep fighting?". His answer: "Because... I'm..... Spider-Man!".



SON\_LOG5 SPIDER-MAN MILES MORALES



GHOST OF TSUSHIMA REHWAPPEN

Well I've been in the VP game for over 8 years now. Started with Halo.. a lot of Halo. Then moved on to greener pastures, expanding what I can do with this new art form. That's one thing I've learned about Virtual Photography. You can't box yourself in, or try your hardest to emulate another's style, just embrace your own, and you'll flourish and enjoy yourself more!

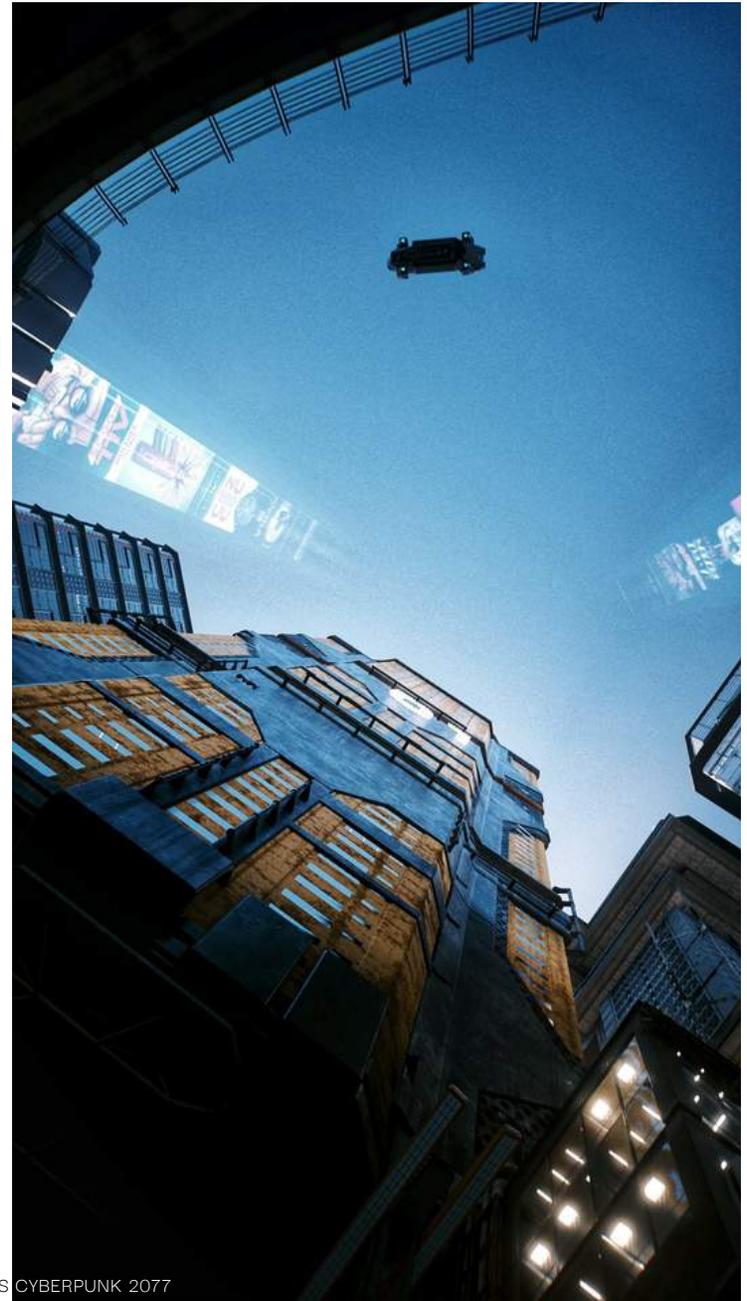
Attention to detail, and try not to just bang shit out. Show love and care to each shot.

I will say film and music are big inspirations on how I shoot. I'm a cinematography slut.

This is not only a wonderful hobby, but a great outlet as well!

And finally this particular shot took me a little bit, just running around the woods in northern Tsushima. (While listening to music) Burn by The Cure started playing. The eerie flute, and crows in the beginning of the track helped paint a clearer picture. Thankfully saw these burning trees you see here, ran over and just started snapping away, doing several walk backs to get it right. Then it all came together as you see here.

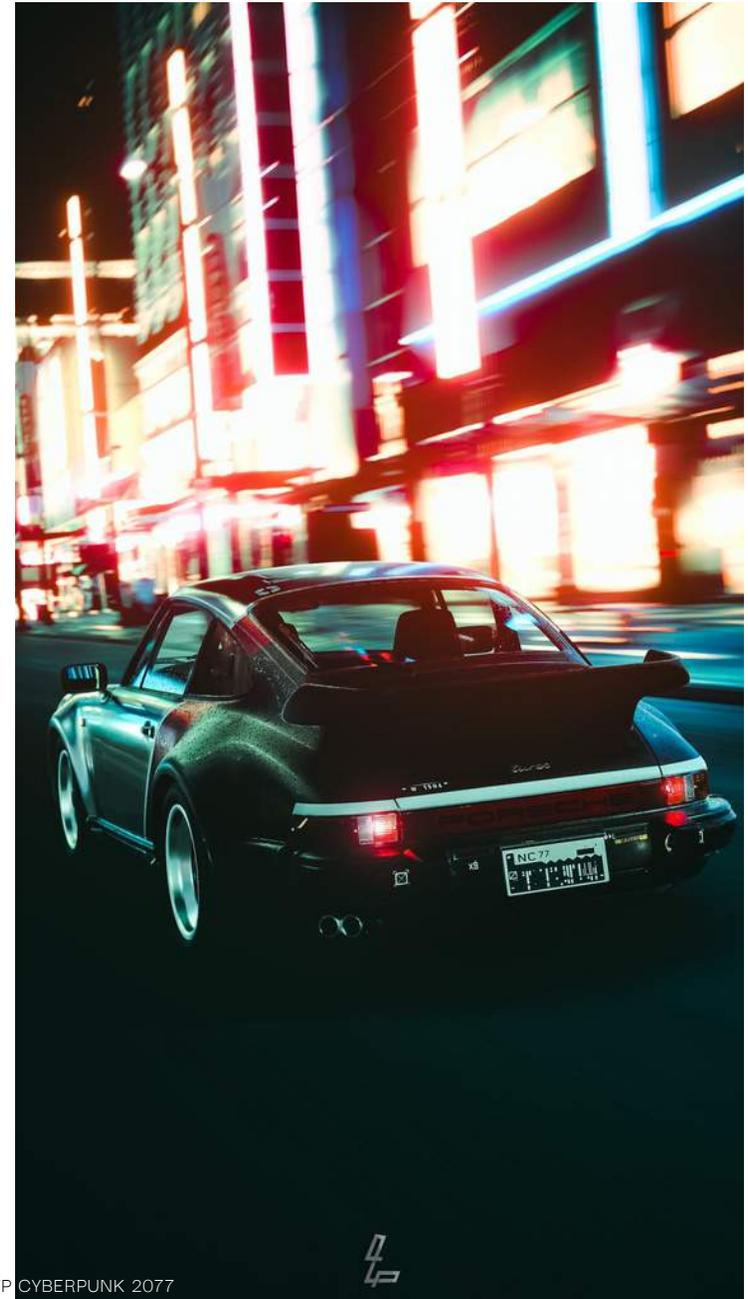
When I took it, it gave me that feeling of being grateful. You know when you go outside or in an open space and you look up at the sky, and then you take a deep breath, you suddenly feel free and thankful that you're still alive and of everything you have. That's what I felt with this shot, and it compliments with the caption as well, to love and be loved, has the same feeling of gratefulness.





Ghost of Tsushima is not only one of my favourite games of all time, but I think it's also the best for virtual photography. The amount of options in the photomode make it perfect for getting interesting shots. I changed the time of day and weather to get this pensive shot of Jin.

My name is Lucent, I'm 27 Years old and I live in Myrtle Beach, SC. I begin my journey into art and photography back in 2016, with a heavy passion and interest around automotive photography. Whenever I had a shoot in IRL, I used virtual photography as a way to practice my ideas in a more relaxed setting, being able to experiment and try new ideas and angles of different subjects. One of my favorite games of all time is Cyberpunk 2077, the story revolved around the game, the rich and nourishing city that the game is built upon and the vast amount of opportunities to express yourself with the art of it all is what truly pulled me in. With my art, I've always strived to push the limits of the possibilities that can be captured in the virtual world, aiming for realism and emotional expression in everything that I do. The idea for this shot came to me while I was playing Gran Turismo 7, to bring the two games together as one set of art. So I created the known iconic car driven by Johnny Silverhand, and took it to the illuminated streets of the cities during the night, and started playing with it. Cyberpunk was always known to have a slight green matted tint to the game, which is something I tried to mimic in the set for that aesthetic touch. I wanted to capture the feel of driving that Porsche in cyberpunk, with the roads puddled and soaked and the mist and rain in the air. And then it all came together, the details, the flow of the set. It all just came together in unison. Throughout majority of my work, I tend to play music that reflects the emotion, theme and setting all together, with the song I had playing when I snapped this being "Never Fade Away", one of the songs featured in Cyberpunk 2077 played by the Fictional Band, Samurai.





The Last of Us is a game about defying our own reality. The clash between the human-made world and nature's reclaim, where buildings are drowned under the sea of vines, vehicles are turned into piles of rust, shelters become rotten, the air is hostile, and humans are no longer concerned with the pressure of time. The need to fulfill one's personal goals is gone, there's nothing to be late for, and everything could turn to dust in the blink of an eye. Day and night, it's all about survival, above everything else.

This is why I hold a particular fascination with Joel's watch, a memento that no longer serves a practical use in the world he inhabits. He's far from a morally just person who carries an ounce of mercy in his mind, and most of the time it's either him or them. And when they stare down the barrels, the last things they see are the furious eye of a man who lost nearly everything, and the memento that reminds us of the time when he didn't.

I see The Last of Us as a reality where human's lowest point is reflected through gratuitous violence, as nobody can survive without losing a part of themselves in this dog-eat-dog world. But violence should not be senseless, violence in The Last of Us is a harrowing hardship that clings on to keep a particular memory alive, to protect it from fading away under the pressure of time.

My name is Nguyen Trong Phan Thong, I'm a soon-to-be-27-year-old ex-writer who has never had artistic talents yet daydreams too much for my own sake. Despite not reaching an age considered "old" anytime soon, I have had memory problems in the last few years of my life. Video games have always been my trusty companion since childhood and virtual photography came to me like a helping hand. I'm forever thankful for having The Last of Us on my 'archiving the past' journey, where once again I'm reminded that memories are no mere snapshots, they keep us alive, they push us towards, and they exist to give hardships in life a purpose.



THE LAST OF US | BLGSSN115

My name is Meri. I go by Raven. I am an artist and virtual photographer. My first real interest in VP showed in Cyberpunk 2077, where the environment and beauty of the game made it easy to express myself and my creativity using props and mods created by others.

I have always had a special place in my heart for the Assassin's Creed franchise, so it was an easy decision to turn to these games next after learning a few things. Overall, virtual photography gives me an opportunity to create something artistic, relax, and showcase details that some may overlook. All my photos are randomly captured; some of them might have hidden meanings, but usually, I let people interpret them as they see fit.

For this specific photo, I wanted to capture Eivor's journey through icy Norway, showing just minimal parts to create a story.





ASSASSINS CREED UNITY ASTROGHOST001

Hello, I'm Astrayn, and my journey into taking screenshots began in 2021. Initially, I had no knowledge about photography or editing. I learned the principles and tools required to capture photos through the VP community. Most notably the video guide by PCGI ([@InquisitorAles](#)) about Virtual Photography that introduced me to this world. The VP community has always been a source of infinite inspiration.

VP is simply the art of capturing moments in games. It isn't just about pressing a button, all the core principles of real life photography still apply here. Principles like composition, lighting, story telling are essential for creating a visually appealing and meaningful photograph. With most games releasing with a photomode these days, it has never been easier to take great photos. I hope more people get to see the amazing work of VPer's and appreciate virtual photography for the art form that it is.

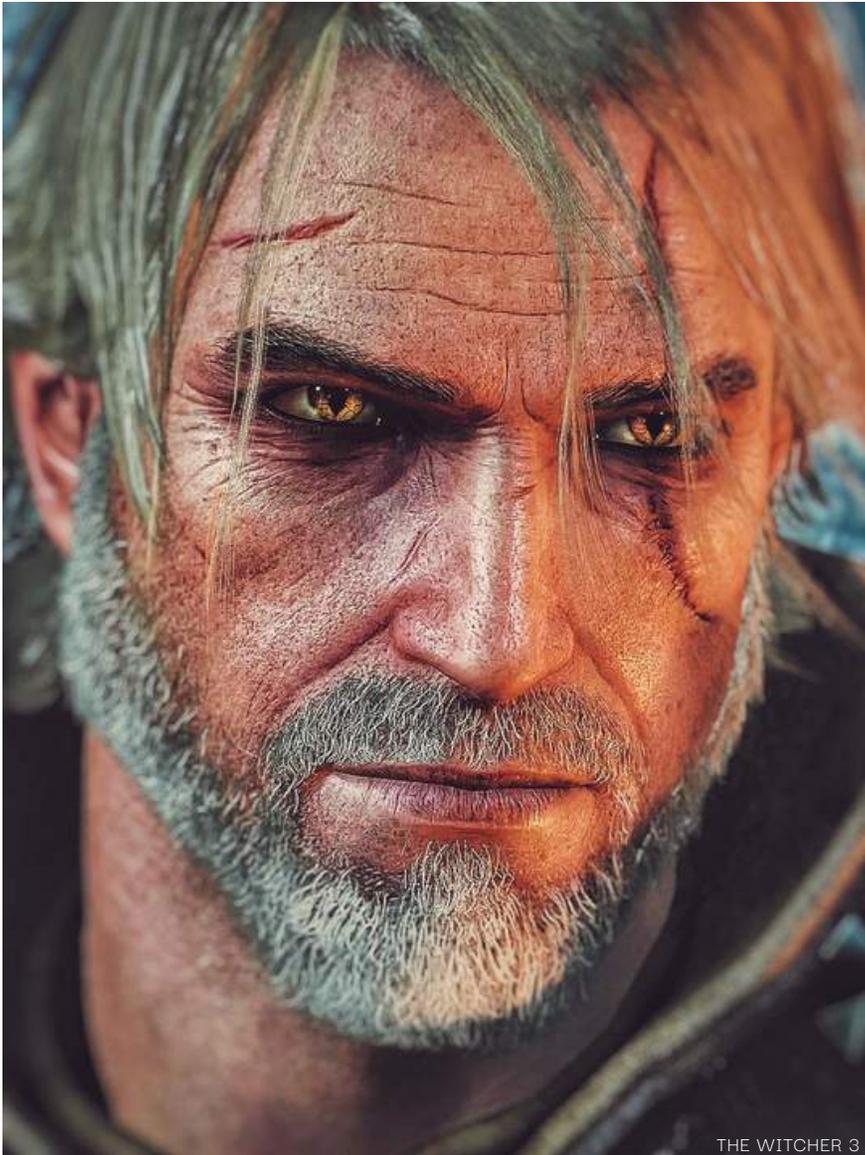
How I took the shot: Assassin's Creed Unity lacks a built-in photo mode, so I turned to Hattiwatti's ([@Hattiwatt1](#)) camera tools for the free cam functionality. I was atop the Notre Dame Cathedral, enjoying the view, when inspiration struck. I paused the game at the perfect moment and activated the free camera mode. It was important to me to highlight the grandeur and scale of the structure as well as the beauty of the architecture. In this shot, I wanted to capture a testament to Arno's fearlessness –a leap of faith.

Well, my name is Brandon, I'm 40, I'm a unionized mechanical insulation foreman . I'm from the states, Mississippi to be exact and have been gaming since the Atari days.

I have been in virtual photography for a while now, not as much as I used to be though, so this is honestly a shocker for me to be featured by you guys. I was an admin for Virtual Photography Gamers for a while before venturing out and creating my own community page, The Gamers Photo.

The girls in the gang we're sleeping at the time in camp on the hard ground, so I went into photo mode to try to capture a shot with the idea of the hardships these guys were going through living in a makeshift camp and on the run with the law fresh on their trail. I panned up and saw how the morning sun was shining through the spokes of the wheel with the gun leaning next to it, and that was it. The shot I was looking for. It all coincided with what I was looking for in my vision of the shot.





THE WITCHER 3 MADDOG7794

My name is Carlos and I'm playing videogames since childhood, and almost 30 years later I still am. I'm not usually on social media but 2 years ago or so I gave Twitter a try and discovered a huge community sharing shots of videogames, calling it virtual photography or VP for short, which was something new to me.

I already had a good handful of photos saved on my console, because I liked to save small moments or scenes that stayed with me when I played, and without realising I shared that passion with so many people.

For me, photographing landscapes, characters, iconic moments... is just another extension of my passion for video games, but over time it has become a way to connect with who is on the other side of the screen and share your own vision of something that many of us experience and have in common.

In short, VP for me is an escape, a hobby, one more way to experience and share video games... but with the number of people who do it and the quality that some creations have, I learned that it has become an artform used to express your vision and experience.

About the photo, I don't think it has story behind it, but when I played The Witcher 3 for the third time and CD Projekt Red introduced the photo mode, one of the things I liked to do the most was capture landscapes and Geralt's expression at different moments. Personally, I love how his entire expression here. His look is very dramatic, that's what I wanted to highlight.



FORZA HORIZON 5 CB\_VPHOTOGRAPHY

I've been wanting to try a shoot like this for a while now. I normally spend an hour in any one eventlab map, getting a feel for the space and seeing what compositions work. I usually take anywhere from 20 to 70 shots, only 10 or so get picked to be shared. This is one of the few maps that made me think, I need to upgrade my setup and procedures because what you see is not just one shot but 7, bracketed and merged to a HDR so you can get the detail where it needs to be. I try and treat virtual photography as photos I want to take in real life but can't and besides model cars, this is a hard one to achieve.

There a ton of improvements I would do now, the background for instance but that's why we start. You won't get very far if you just think about the idea. Don't let perfect be the enemy of good enough, you can always improve later.

I'm Legion of Elgor. Cinematography fan, casual photographer, film buff, gamer, overall lover of striking imagery. VP for me has been an amazing outlet. I have learned so much more about photography by simply playing around with the Photo Mode features of a game like Marvel's Spider-Man. IRL you're limited to the space you can physically occupy. Also time, budget or even gravity. I can't swing from Skyscrapers in NYC with perfectly placed lights to get that perfect shot IRL. But I can certainly do it in VP.

I really like playing around with light and shadow. For this shot I just placed a spotlight behind Spidey to simulate a moonlit night. I like the way it captures all of the lines of the fire escape slightly hiding Spider-Man and he's staring right at you.



LEGIONOFELGOR SPIDER-MAN

There is much to be considered before the sword is drawn -  
Baltasar Gracian

Going against what you have been taught and a moral code you believe in is never easy and the struggle Jin faces with the choice of being a Samurai like his Uncle and Father before him or become the Ghost that would save his people is what makes Jin's story one of my favorites. There is so much emotion to what his choices will mean and the change of his character slowly is what makes doing virtual photography in Ghost of Tsushima so rewarding. There is a challenge to trying to capture emotion and weight of Jin's story with a photo and I was excited when I was able to capture this particular sword image. Setting this shot up I had a different idea in mind, but a small tweak led to something I felt made a more symbolic image and I hope that comes across to others when they view it.





The Last Of Us Part I & II are my favourite games, and definitely my most posted. Portraits are my go to. I love playing with light and shadows to try and create a dark atmosphere that represents the game. The photomode itself isn't great, but I love the challenge of trying to get a great shot.

MEGAPIXAL MEMORIES

THE LAST OF US PART II MEGPIXAL MEMORIES



THE LAST OF US PART II --AURON--

I like to think that virtual photography is a new kind of creativity. Narrowly focused, underground, not understood by many people and therefore interesting. It feels a bit like a pioneer, trying to find the limit, trying something new, and it gives me inspiration. I wonder how far it will all go.

I am a Automotive Virtual Photographer and avid car enthusiast. I only focus on car games like Forza, Forza Motorsport, GT7 and now Motorfest. I've been doing Virtual Photography for a little over 2 years after seeing a post on Instagram of Forza Horizon 4. I took my first photo in horizon 4 and was hooked. I just have fun with it, I love the editing process. All my photos are edited in light room and I don't have any one style, but each photo I take, its all about the cars.

PIXELSDRIVEN FORZA HORIZON 5





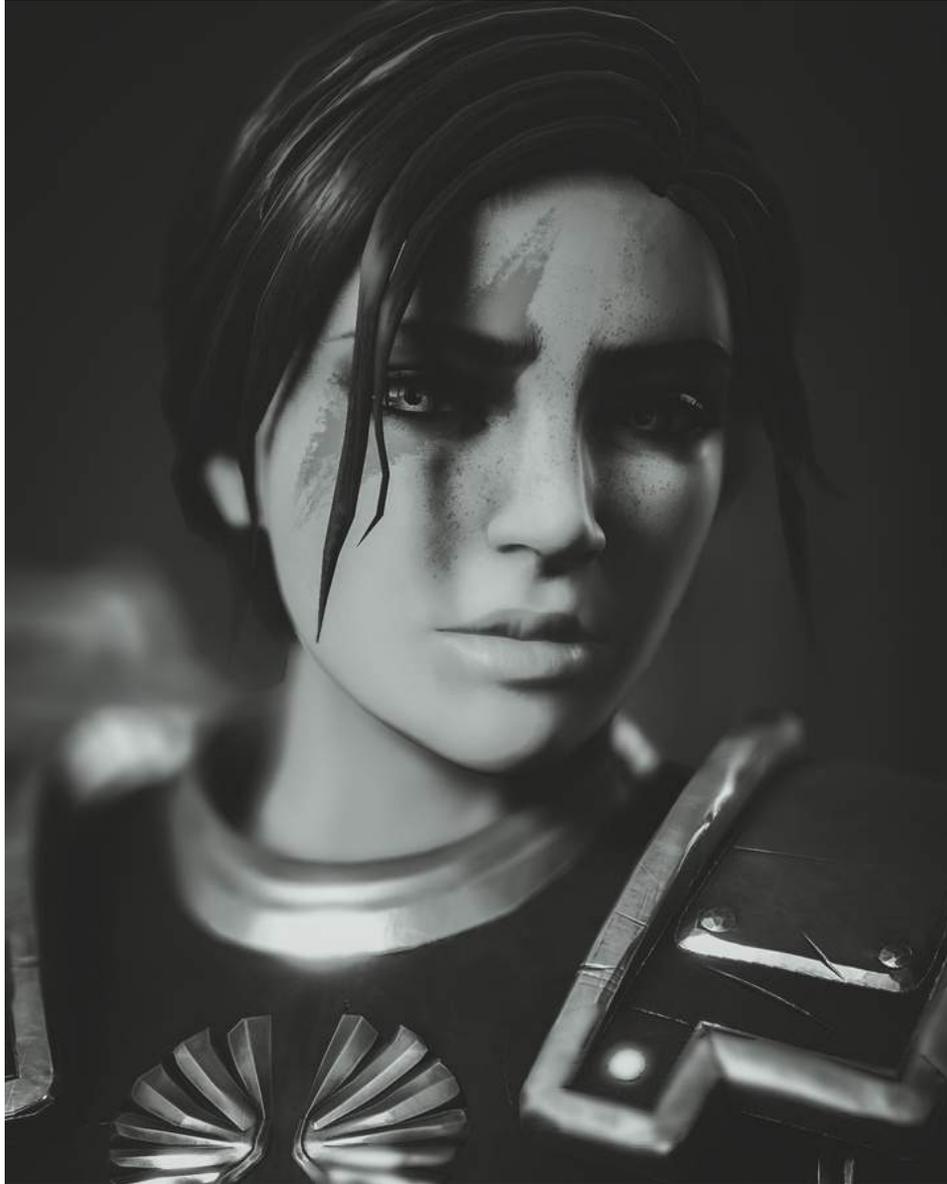
A lot of my VP in Horizon Forbidden West consists of Aloy frolicking in the water. It's a visual combination I love & experiment with quite a lot. I really liked the idea of her being in front of a waterfall but I wanted my shot to stand out from the rest. It took countless hours of experimenting with the light in the game to finally pull off this multicoloured rainbow shot.

I timed it just right as the angle of the sun was shining down on the water to produce the exact shade of orange and pink that I wanted. I then added a blue light to the darker shade of orange to create a bright purple then it came together perfectly! This game is so next level, with its translucent water & active light particles, that it's crazy I could even do something like mix light sources to create new colours.

VP&ME WITH  
**KRISTOFFER |**  
SPIGGY

In this issue we catch up with VP royalty, Spiggy\_Smalls. We touch upon what kickstarted his virtual photography journey, his creative process, highlights and more.





Hi Kristopher, could you tell us and everyone reading a bit about yourself and how you came to discover virtual photography?

Hello!

My name is Kristoffer, also known as Spiggy\_Smalls on X. I began doing virtual photography back with Gran Turismo 5. This was back in late 2010. I joined a small little community where we showcased our different cars taken in the game.

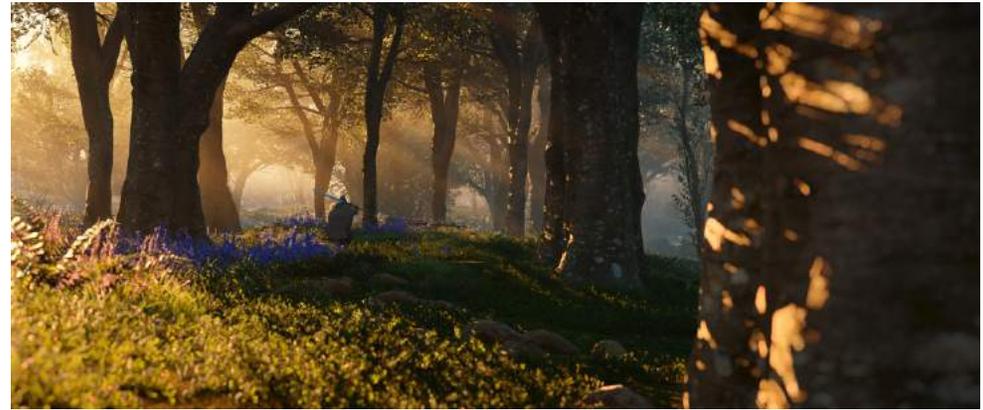
It really took off once I got in to the Snapmatic community in GTA V: Online. Here I participated in many contests Rockstar Games used to host on their Rockstar Social Club. Once that Social Club gallery got full, I started to post my photos on X, and that's where it started. This was back in 2017.

We'll start easy, what is your favourite game to capture and why?

I don't have a specific game that is my favourite, but I do like to shoot the Assassins Creed games. Recently I've been grabbing shots from Marvel's Spider-Man 2 as well. That photomode is so fun to use!

Speaking of Assassins Creed, you've previously had some involvement with Ubisoft Nordic, correct?

I've been lucky to have been a member of the old Mentor's Guild. This was a program aimed towards fans of the Assassins Creed franchise. Together with the other fantastic members of the guild, we got to attend workshops, reveals and we even got the chance to design our own weapons that made their way into Assassins Creed Valhalla! Unfortunately the Mentor's Guild is no more. I am now a member of the Ubisoft Star Players instead. As a Star Player, we get to share our passion for games with our community, share exclusive moments and meet the development teams behind the games we play.





You've previously put your skills to good use and worked with PlayStation to showcase God of War Ragnarök, how did that come about and what was the experience like?

Yes. I've been fortunate enough to get to know this fantastic woman that works for PlayStation Norway. She emailed me asking if I wanted to take some shots in GoW Ragnarok for their instagram, which I happily did. It was quite the challenge though, as the game turned out to have a not so good photomode. I managed to get some good shots, and they can all be seen on Playstation Norways instagram page.

Out of all your shots, which one is your favourite and why?

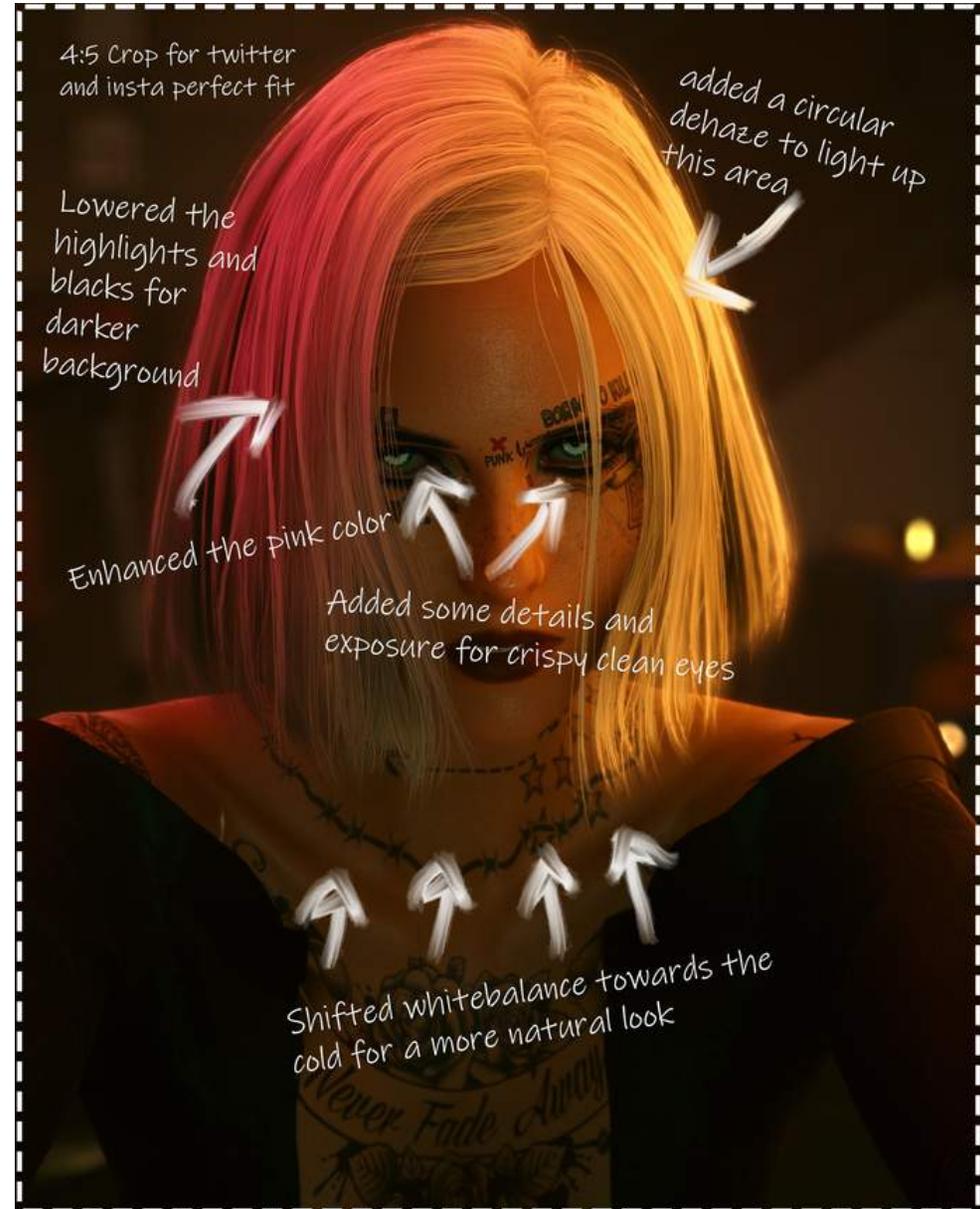
This is a tough one! I think I have to say my Cyberpunk portrait of my V, staring into the camera with her emerald eyes. It has been nominated for the VP Awards, been on display in Trafalgar Square and also sits on a wall in my house.

You have quite a unique way of showing your editing technique, what's the story behind this and do you think it's helped other artists in their journey?

The "to edit, or not to edit" debate can go on forever. Everyone knows that I edit my shots and I love it. It's a part of the process in my opinion, depending on the game of course. I got inspired to show off the way I edit just to show my followers that editing isn't scary, and that we should not be afraid to edit. I got inspired by some of the photographers I follow, especially a photographer called Kyle Meshna. Very good landscape photographer. He made these "doodles" showcasing his edits. Many other photographers followed along, and I thought I'd be nice to bring it in to VP as well.

What's kept you going with VP?

I've been on and off regarding VP many times. I get burned out, come back, burned out again. This is a never ending cycle. What keeps me coming back is the community, and the pride everyone has in their virtual photography.





Do you draw inspiration from other media/art forms? If so, what are they?

I get a lot of inspiration from various photographers on Youtube. Peter Mckinnon, James Popsys and Peter Lindgren to name a few. I'm also of course inspired by all the amazing people posting all their virtual photography on X.

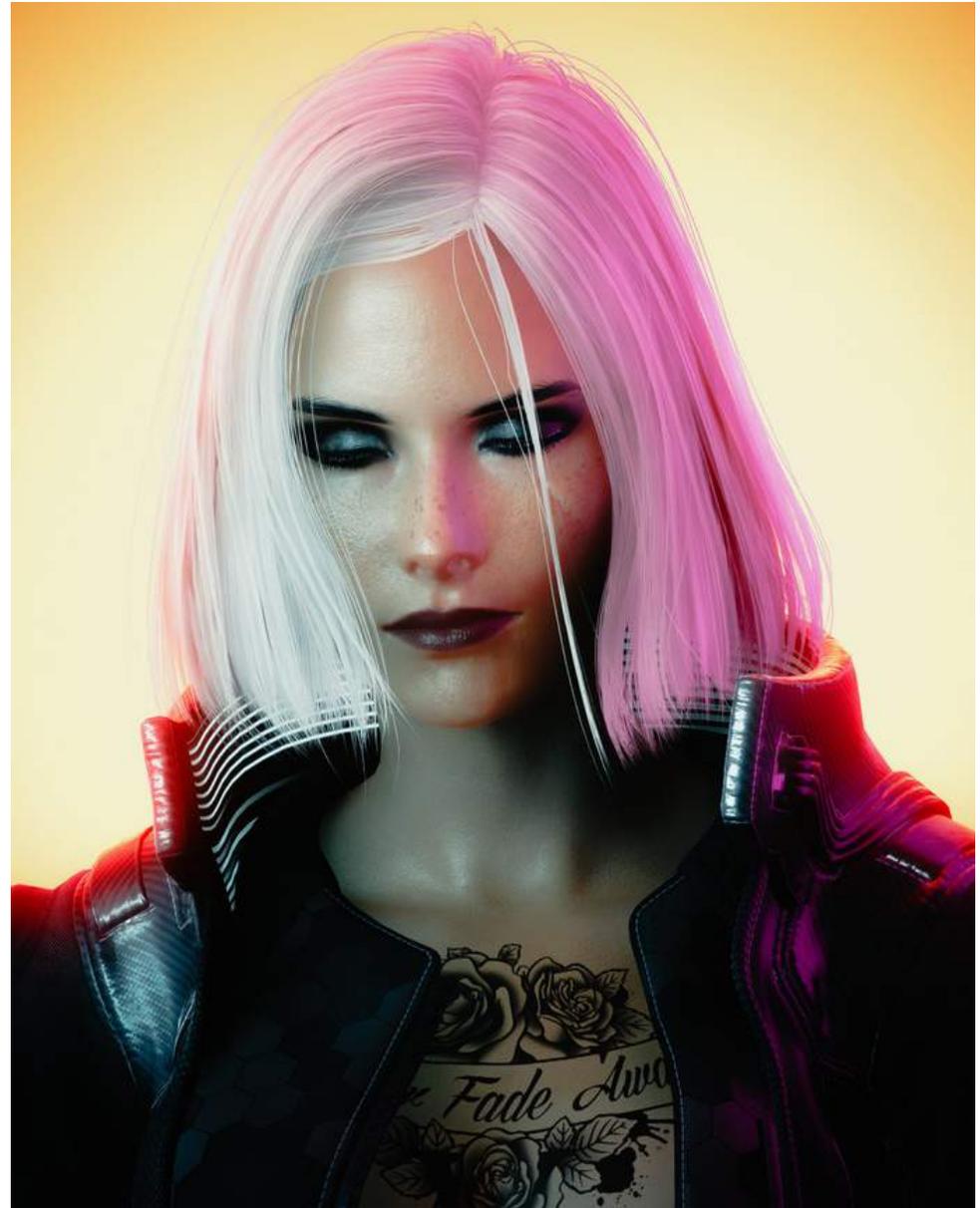
You're also a wiz with a camera and drone in real life too, does the experience of real world photography carry over into virtual photography or vice versa?

I have a bachelors degree in multimedia technology, specializing in film and photo, but this didn't really take off after I finished University. It wasn't until the lockdown in 2020 that I decided to get myself a camera. I figured that since we couldn't really do much outside our homes, going out photographing would be a fun activity. I did take a lot from what I've done within VP out to the real world, but I also have taken a lot of what I've learned from the university to the VP arena.

What are the top four people, places, things and events you like to photograph in the real world and virtual ones?

When I am out photographing, I like to be alone in the wilderness. Nothing is better than breathing in the fresh air and walking in the mountains. Iceland has been one of my top tier places to photograph lately. Waterfalls, northern lights, mountains, volcanoes and glaciers to name a few things I've photographed.

In the virtual worlds, I tend to go for landscapes and portraits. My character in Cyberpunk has been particularly fun to shoot, just because of all the possibilities with mods.





Could you talk us through your favourite (real world) photograph?

I think my favourite photograph must be the one I managed to take while I was traveling to Iceland for work. This was one of my first times in Iceland, so I was a little bit of an express tourist, visiting all the places in one go. This particular photo is of a waterfall called Skogafoss. It is one of Iceland's most famous waterfalls. I visited first during the daytime while traveling east, took a few pretty good shots of it, before I left. While I was traveling back home it got dark. I decided to stop at this waterfall again to see if I could get some long exposure shots of the water when I noticed in the camera some northern lights. I decided to wait about one hour until the skies opened up with a green bright show of northern lights! I think I captured a once in a lifetime shot of the lights above the waterfall.

What do you think makes a good photograph?

This is quite a subjective opinion of course, so please take my answer with a grain of salt, but I like a photo that manages to create a story, or create some sort of emotions.

Lastly, do you have any advice for anyone reading this who's just starting VP?

Social Media has ruined photography by making us post our "bangers" only. It is almost impossible to take "bangers" only. If you do, people will expect the best all the time, making the best impossible to achieve. If you enjoy virtual photography, just take photos. Not every photo will be a hit photo.



# DELIVER US MARS

We talk with Remco Dazelaar, and Jeremy Diederich, Lead Programmer and Lead Environment/3D Artist respectively, from KeokeN Interactive, about Deliver Us Mars and its photomode.

What was the inspiration/decision behind including a photomode in the game?

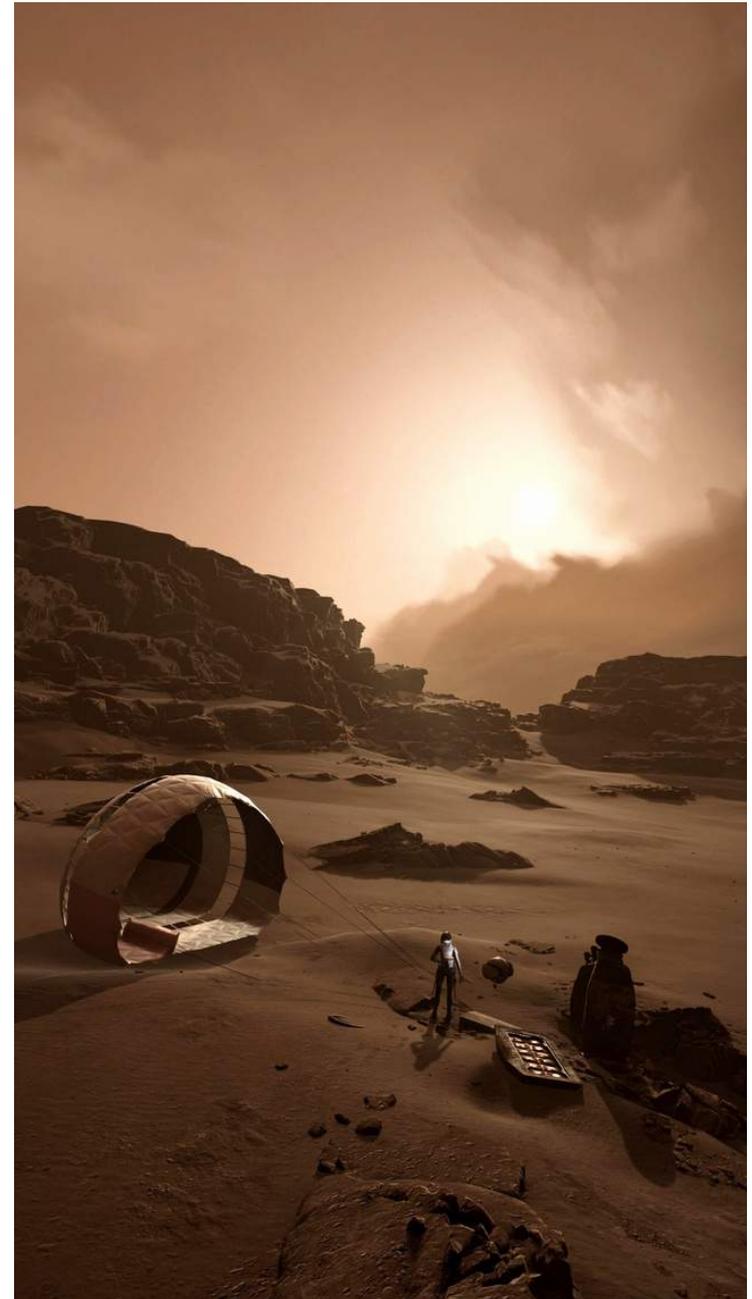
**Remco** - The decision to include photo mode came largely from our passion for the project and because we were very satisfied with our high fidelity visuals, we wanted to give the players (and us) more options to capture the iconic scenes in our game. Another reason was that we wanted to let the players pause the game and just look around the scene a bit more. As sometimes a lot of details we put into some scenes go by unnoticed, because of the speed or focus of certain sequences.

What was the most important feature you wanted to include in the photomode and why?

**Remco** - Actually, the main feature of the underlying system was to be able to pause the game during cutscenes. We felt like people would miss certain parts of the cutscenes if they had to move away from the game while being unable to pause them. But if I had to specifically mention a Photomode feature, it would be the filter option. Personally, I am not a fan of using filters as it can obscure the reality and details of a picture. However in a narrative experience, where there is a lot of storytelling and emotion involved, a filter can change the feeling or impression of a scene. For example driving through a vast and barren landscape, one player could feel relaxed and peaceful, for another it could give a sense of adventure and excitement to find out what happens next and for yet another this scene could make them feel lonely and sad.

Were you influenced by other photomodes within the industry? If so, which ones?

**Remco** - We have taken some idea's from popular games for example in Spider-Man and The Last of us. But in general we have used a lot of options the Unreal Engine allowed us to change on runtime, including Post-Processing effects.





Have you seen any particularly creative or impressive shots by players in the community?

**Jeremy** - Absolutely! Many of our players take pleasure in capturing images that showcase the desolation of Mars and highlight how small our characters are in comparison. As I reflect on these observations, I checked our game pillars and one of them is "Magnificent Desolation." I appreciate the fact that our players have chosen to focus on this particular aspect in their shots, indicating that the feeling has been effectively conveyed throughout the game. The art team has done a great job in creating this atmosphere across the various locations we can explore in Deliver Us Mars.



And what would be a space game without space shuttles, space stations in orbit, and crash sites? Another category of shots that amazes me is how players find ways to showcase the huge human built structures, the stars or the Martian landscape. Well, maybe I'm cheating a little by showcasing these pictures, because VPs have put my work on display in them! But to be more specific, I appreciate the contrast of colours they incorporate, such as the warm tones of Mars juxtaposed with the cold metallic shade of ZEPHYR (the space shuttle), or the disparity between the reflective surface of the solar panels and the vast void of space.



**Remco** - Yes! We are very actively following our community and we see amazing captures that keep surprising us almost daily. There are a lot of nooks and hidden spots that players can now access by using the photomode freecam drone, allowing for very interesting and unique perspectives that we haven't discovered ourselves yet.

How do you balance creative freedom within a photomode with the need to maintain the game's storytelling integrity?

**Remco** - There is a distinctive line between playing the game and being immersed in it during certain story beats. The photomode, in general, is a tool that allows the player to capture and tweak moments in a way that they experience them. If anything, I would say that it strengthens the integrity of the story we are trying to tell as people have different impressions and experience different emotions. Sometimes the lighting and colour grades in a certain scene could change the setting or highlight those player emotions. Even though players have the freedom to change quite some elements, I think being able to express and share those emotions as a player is more important than restraining the storytelling to just our perspective.

From concept to execution, which ideas/visions of the environments changed the most drastically?

**Jeremy** - When I joined KeokeN Interactive, the team was in the midst of the Vertical Slice phase, meaning the vision for each environment was already established. However, there is one particular level that underwent significant changes during development: Labos Wreckage.

Picture a crash site after a colossal space ark has fallen from the sky. I had the opportunity to work on the initial art pass for this area. As an environment artist, my primary role is to model and texture various objects for the game, not necessarily to place them. However, in this case, I had the chance to influence the level art directly and witness its evolution up close month after month.

I must admit, I was initially concerned about the credibility of this location. Crash sites typically involve crumpled sheet metal, broken walls, and a lot of debris. I wasn't sure if I could create high-quality meshes to make the place believable. In the end, Labos Wreckage became one of my favorite levels.





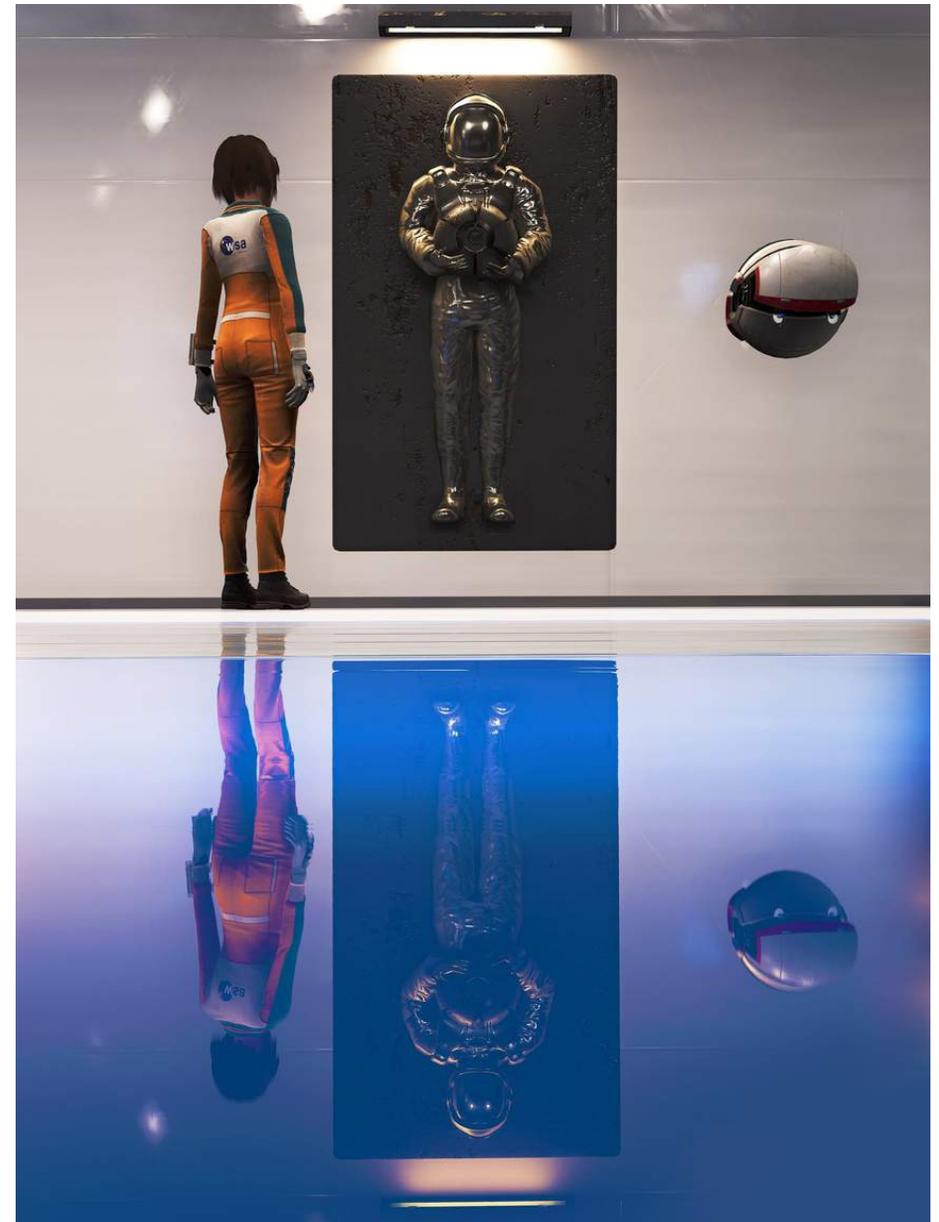
## What are the key ingredients for immersive worldbuilding?

**Jeremy** - Consistency and credibility, for every aspect of the game, including graphics, sound, gameplay,...

Another pillar of Mars was "Hard Science-Fiction", where the world of Deliver Us Mars is grounded sci-fi, playing by the rules of real-life science. Technology is slightly futuristic, but nowhere near cybernetics, nanotechnology and fantastical scientific advances. When I was designing the environment, my goal was always to make my creations believable in their shape and texture. If I needed to push the boundaries a bit, I aimed to never break the suspension of disbelief for the player.

In the game, we feature a technology known as the MPT network (Microwave Power Transmission), enabling the transmission of power through outer space or the atmosphere without the need for wires. Normally, the human eye cannot see the waves being transmitted, but for the sake of believability and playability of our game, we've made them visible. In such situations it was necessary for us to tweak the reality a bit.

That's what makes Deliver Us Mars an immersive experience for me!

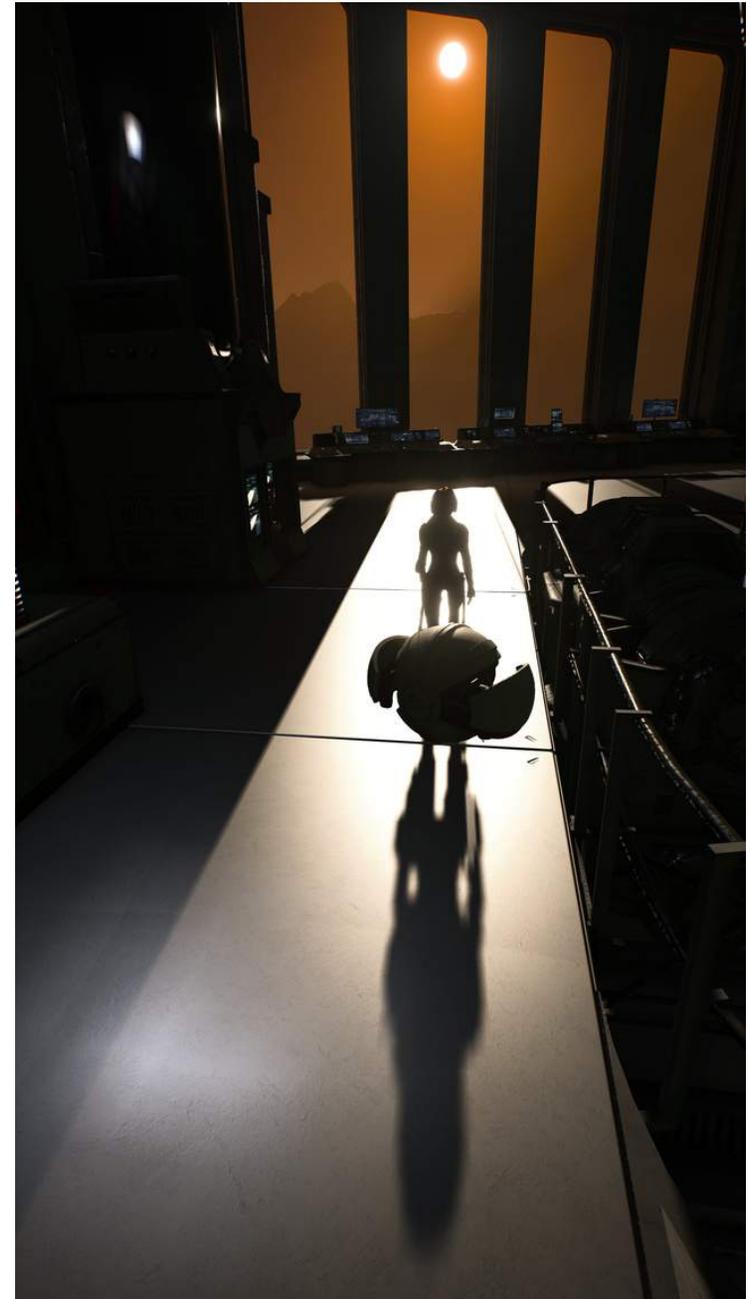
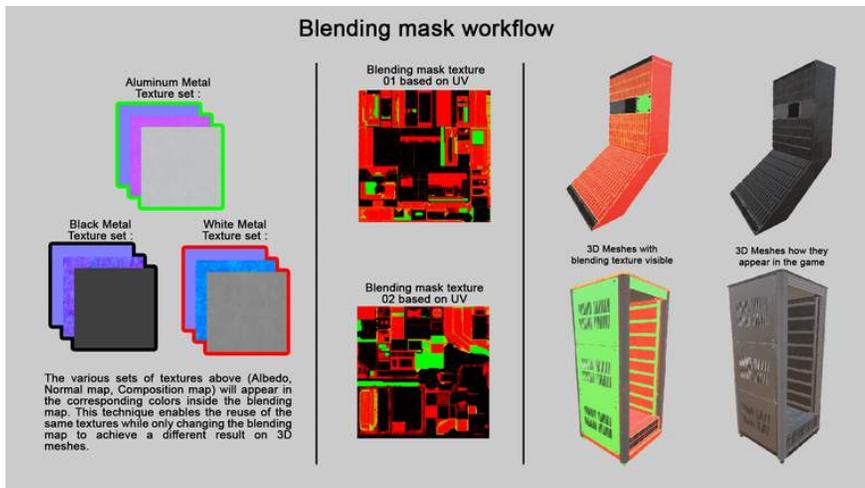


What considerations go into creating visually stunning and functional environments while balancing the creative and technical aspects of the game?

**Jeremy** - One of my initial and primary objectives was to enhance and modernize the 3D workflow within the company. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to work with a technical artist, Daniel Torkar, from the beginning. He helped to reach the graphic fidelity I aimed for, always mindful of the technical considerations to maintain a smooth 60 FPS experience.

In our approach, we focused on creating master materials to minimize the amount of instructions and input textures. We aimed to efficiently reuse existing resources instead of generating new ones. If a new mesh was needed, we opted for creating a prefab instead.

A notable technique we employed is called blending maps, allowing us to texture numerous meshes throughout the game. Similar to vertex painting, but instead of manually painting, colour information is contained in a single texture comprising black, green, red, and blue colours. This enables us to reuse the same texture set for each colour and achieve different results on various meshes simply by changing the blending texture.





The hard work that goes into creating games is incredible. We believe photomodes allow gamers to see and appreciate the environment in more detail, is this something you and others like seeing from those who share in-game images?

**Jeremy** - Certainly! This is one of the primary reasons that pushed many studios, including ours, to incorporate a photo mode in the game. Our players, once active participants in controlling the characters, become creators. They can extend their experience further through this creative outlet.

When players take the time to capture images of our game environment, it gives us a sense of gratification. It indicates that we are doing a great job of creating an engaging experience for them.

Interestingly, some of the screenshots we receive from our game were taken before the release of our photo mode, which means that some players used their own tools for capturing these moments. That level of dedication is truly commendable!

Will player feedback play a role in shaping the development and/or improvement of the photomode in future games?

**Remco** - Absolutely, we pay a lot of attention to reactions and feedback we get out of the community, reviews and social media. We find ourselves getting blindsighted to the different perspectives players may have, due to playing and testing the game so much. So any fresh new insights from players that give us new ideas, complaints, or suggestions are very valuable to us to improve our product.

Lastly, are there any special shout-outs you would like to give to your teammates who have built this amazing game?

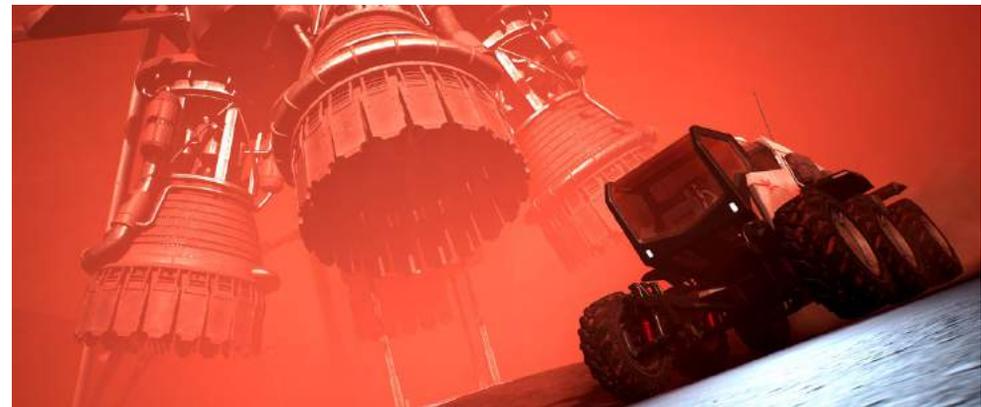
**Jeremy** -I instantly felt at home when I joined this studio. KeokeN is the place I have stayed the longest since I started my journey as an environment artist, and it's where I've learned the most. Making 'Deliver Us Mars' was such a fun and amazing experience. From the start, I felt understood and heard. Having the ability to give my opinion and having a real impact on our creation was truly rewarding.

I would like to express my gratitude to Gerben Pasjes, our artistic director and a real human Swiss army knife. We had many interesting conversations about the game industry. Also, a special thanks to Daniel Torkar for his assistance in the creation of our environment, always ready to accommodate my artistic whims.

To my two bosses, the Deetman Brothers, thank you for making the best decision of your lives by hiring me! And to everybody else inside the studio, we made a great game, and I'm proud of it!!

**Remco** - I think everyone deserves the same amount of praise, but in particular our art department has worked really hard to push our visual fidelity to the next level when compared to our previous title. Sometimes it's wonderful to just walk around and explore all the small details and easter eggs that can be found throughout our game. And a special shout-out to our Audio team, as they were able to enrich the experience with an amazing suite of compositions to bring all the visual splendor to life.

Thank you for joining us Jeremy and Remco, its been an absolute pleasure!



# TPM MIRAGE

Special Community Theme 2023

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COVER IMAGE BY SOLEMIST



BELEGARSSON115



MIMIH\_VP



UVIOLETRA



TAKASANGAMES



THESPUDSTER\_VP



MKSYSTEM74



MURPHYGAMEPHOTO



THECHAD\_1978



RAMBO\_590



MILZ\_VP



SUMMERS458



PHOTOMODEREVIEW



FLYINGRODENTVP



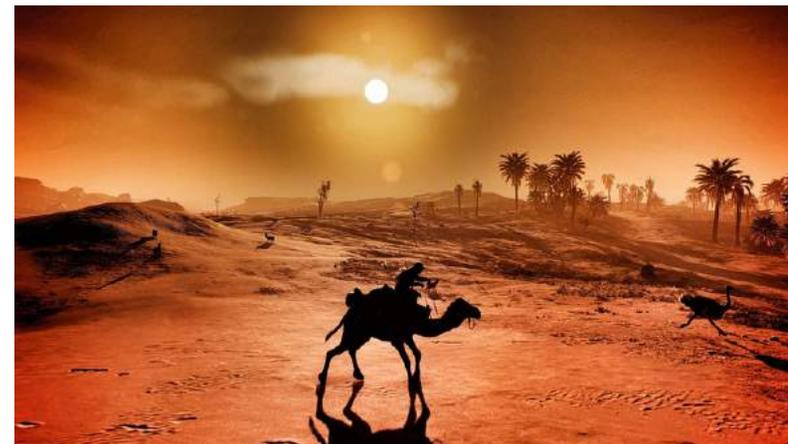
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BIRGAMERINALBU1



G\_ASSASSINgo



GIRAPH\_1



DIAPHRAGAMER



KREATIVEGEEK



DISCOPHOTOMODE



PHOTOINGAME



EVO\_PIXEL



KHALID\_JUMHA



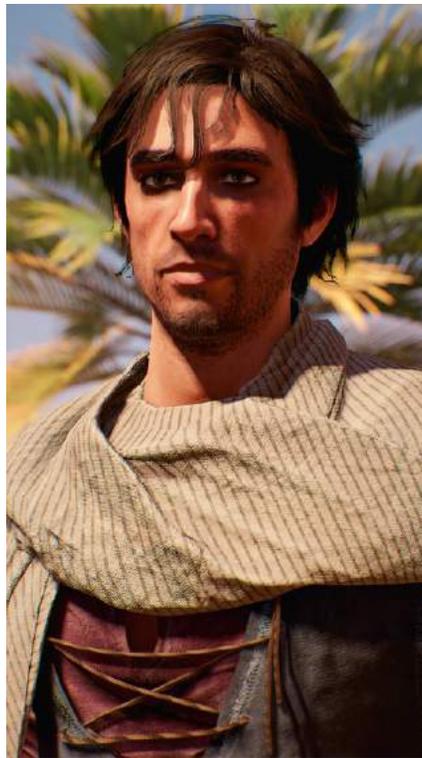
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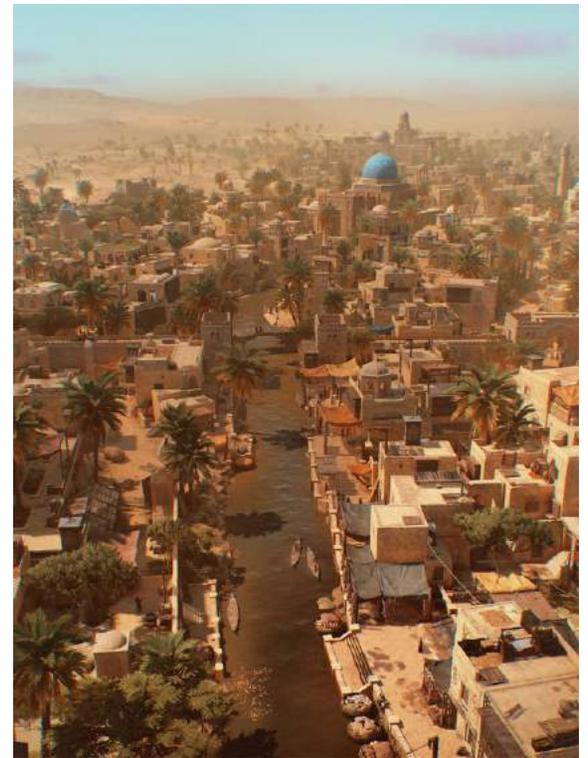
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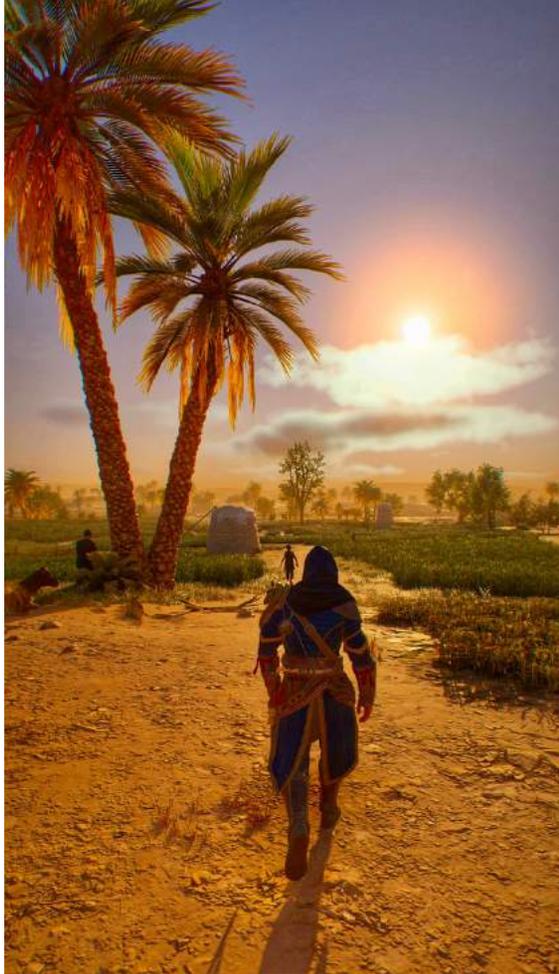
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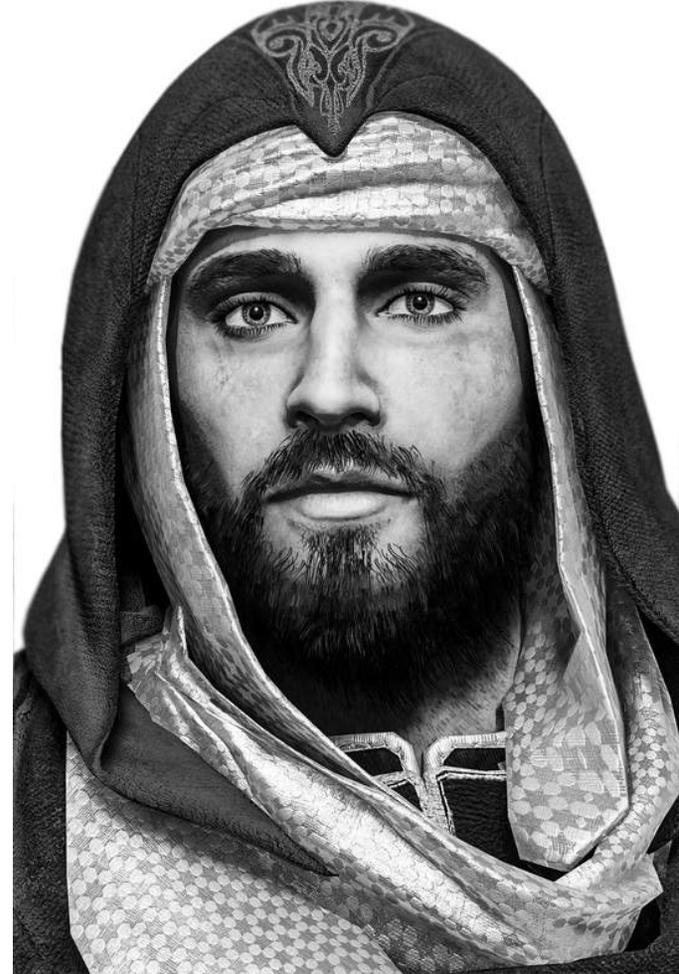
SAROKEY



KAIVIRTUALPHOTO



RABEA139



NOVA1990



IRONJOY



ALANWoke

# RESOURCE LIST



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VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
MINIMALISM TIPS AND TRICKS  
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# TPM VEHICLES

Community Theme May 2023



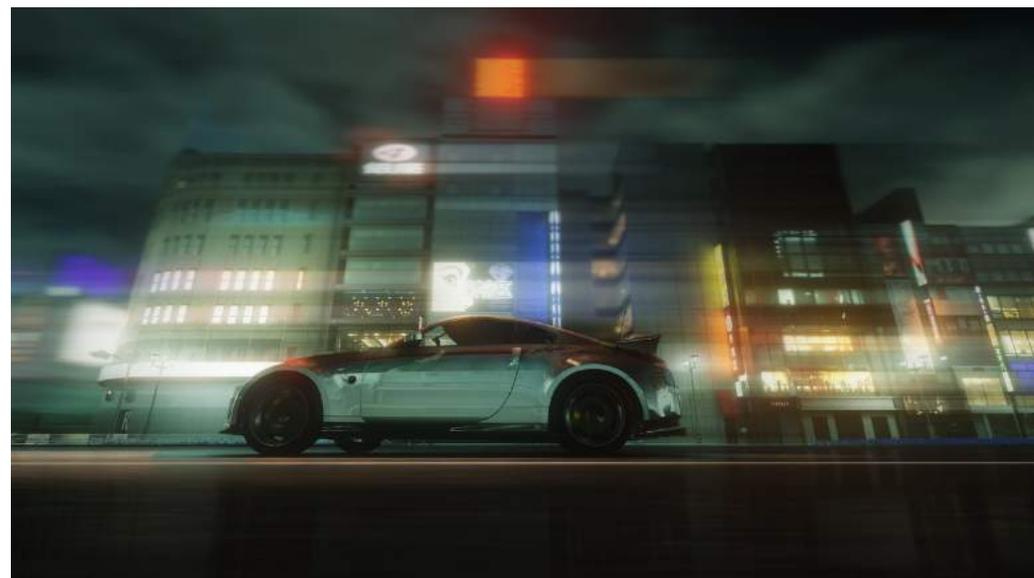
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GEEKNAMEDMIKE



HAL\_DOUBLE



COMPUT\_ART



REDDEADGEM



AMICH\_VP



MIB94VP



VIRTUAL\_KODA



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LIBERTICA\_TH



THORNEY1974



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VANTAGESTUDIOUK



DANI3LBUR7ON



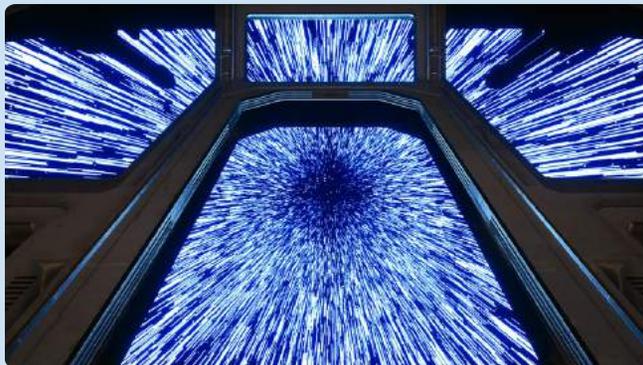
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GRIMREAPERVP

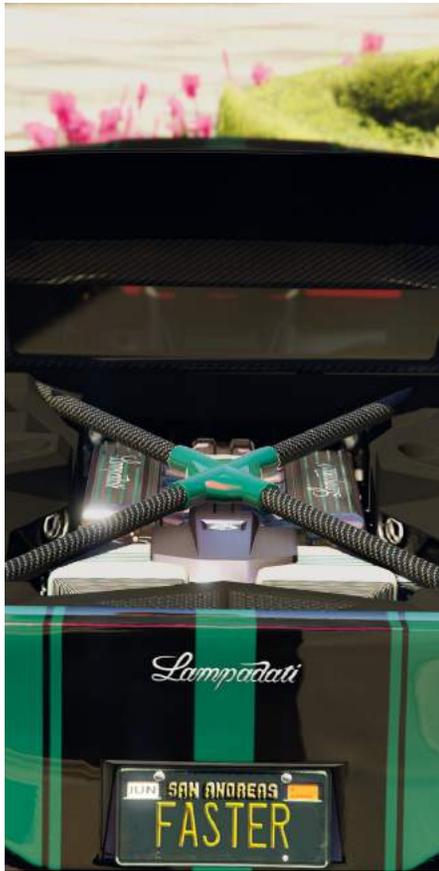


DASH\_845



THE\_EPICDUDE

SNI1PERR



BETWEENPIXELS

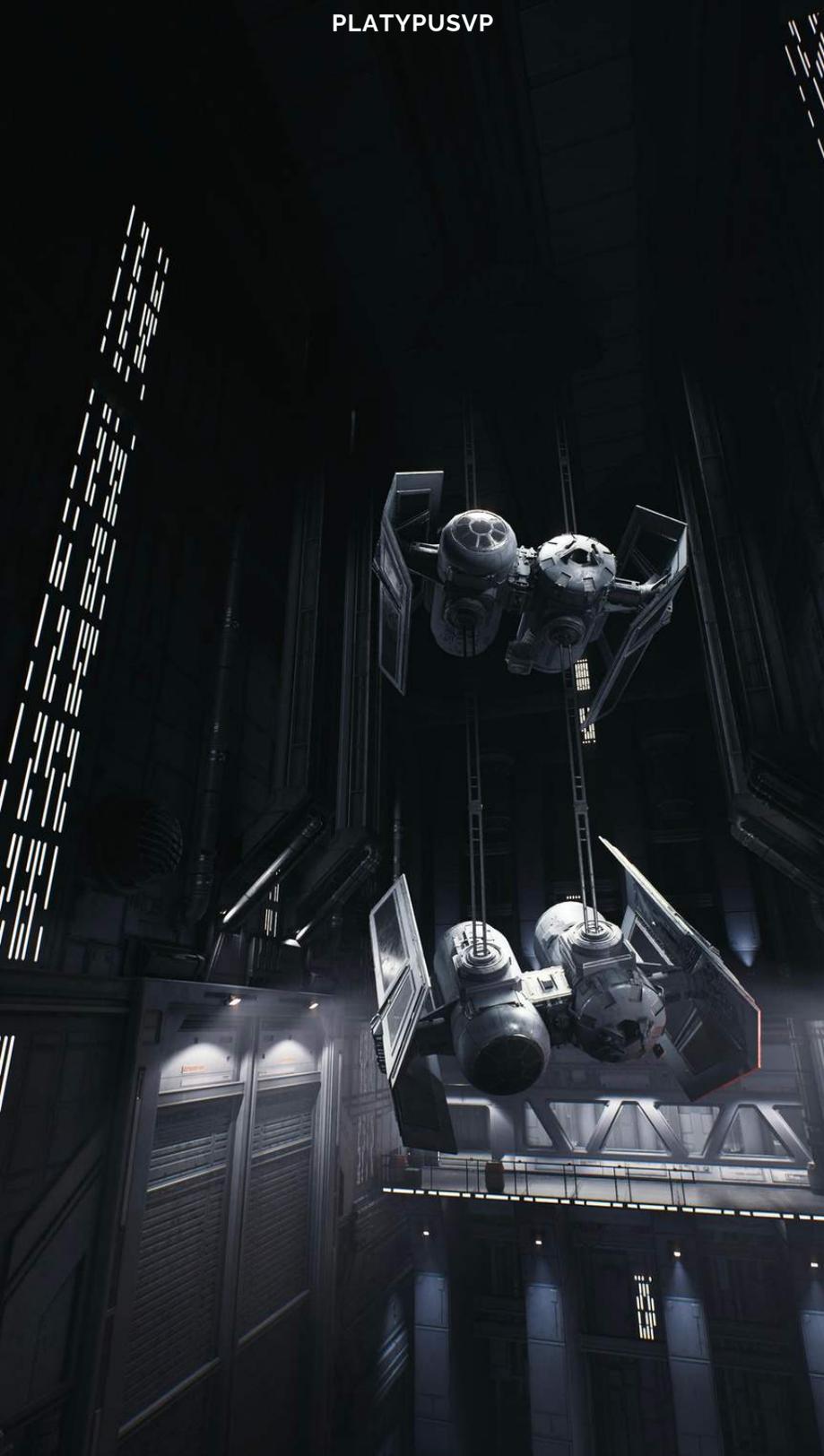


VOID\_WALKR



COP\_FILIP

PLATYPUSVP



POLARNINJAVP



CALISARAH1998



# TPM PORTRAIT

Community Theme June 2023

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BETWEENPIXELS



EMERALDENVOY



JOYRIDER2525



M\_NT\_13



VIRTUAL\_KODA



SECONDCAPTURE



FENYR\_ONX



PIKA\_POD



THE HIGH PRIESTESS

CYBERGIGL



TURIDTORKIL



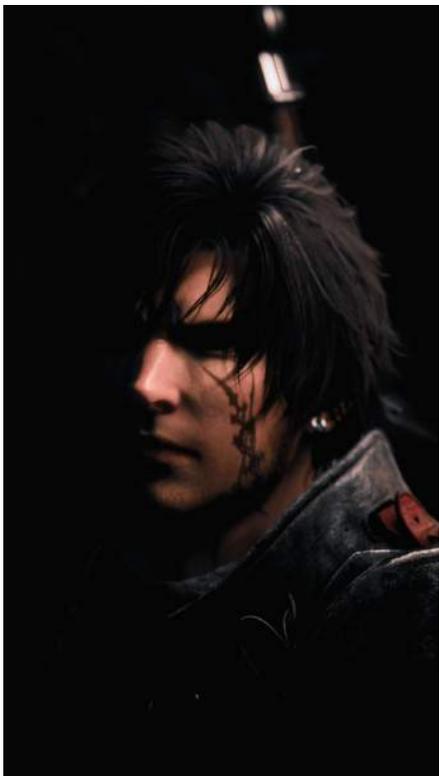
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GINOZA\_EXTENDED



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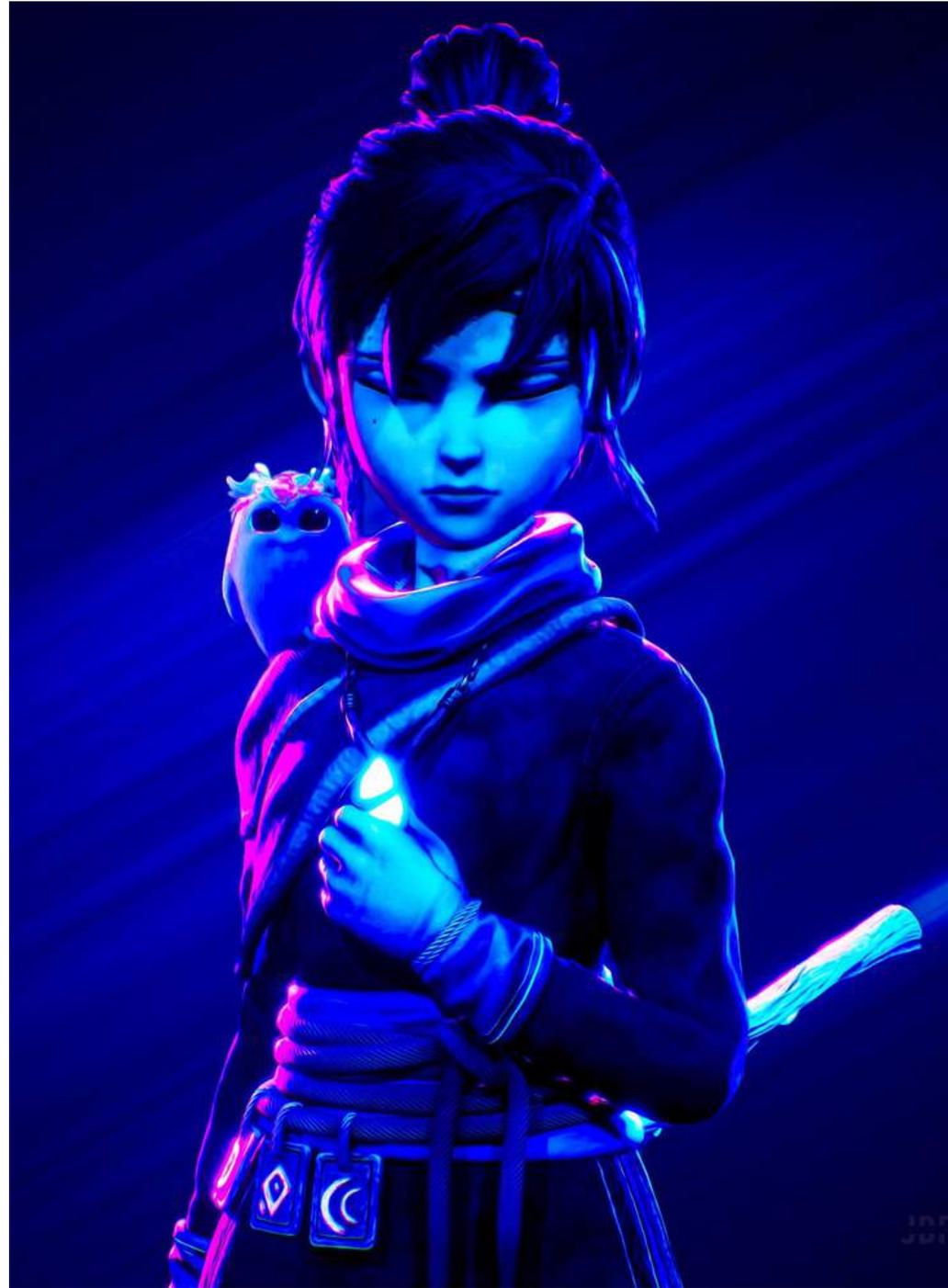
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DJKE11ER2488



KINGFOREVER008



JACKDEEFOX

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DetoxX\_HUN96

DETOXX\_HUN96



ALPHA  
SUNII

ALPHA\_SUNII



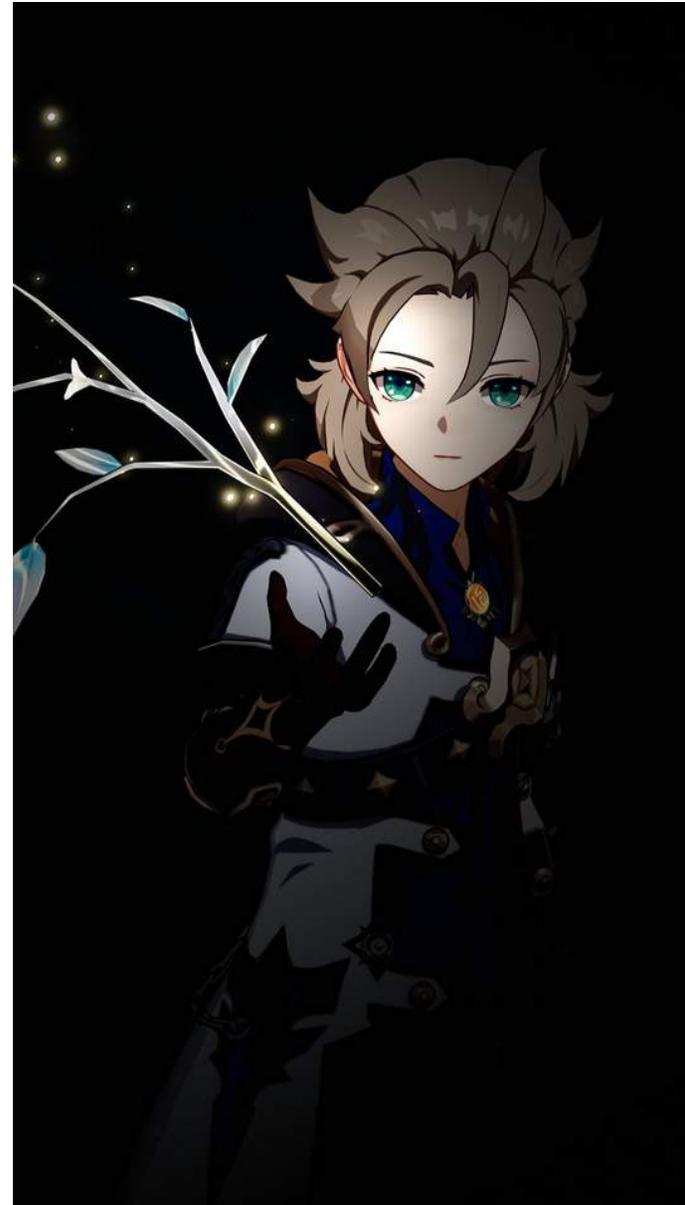
XJQXZ66



ROMANO\_AMANO



AMICH\_VP



MIYOSHIVP

# TPM LEADING LINES

Community Theme July 2023

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POLARNINJAVP



PHOTOMODEOFTSU



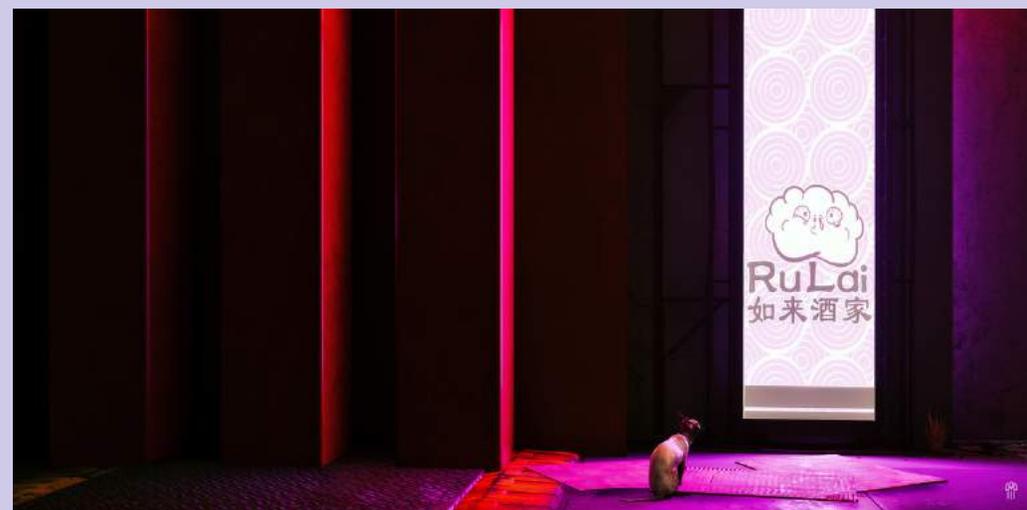
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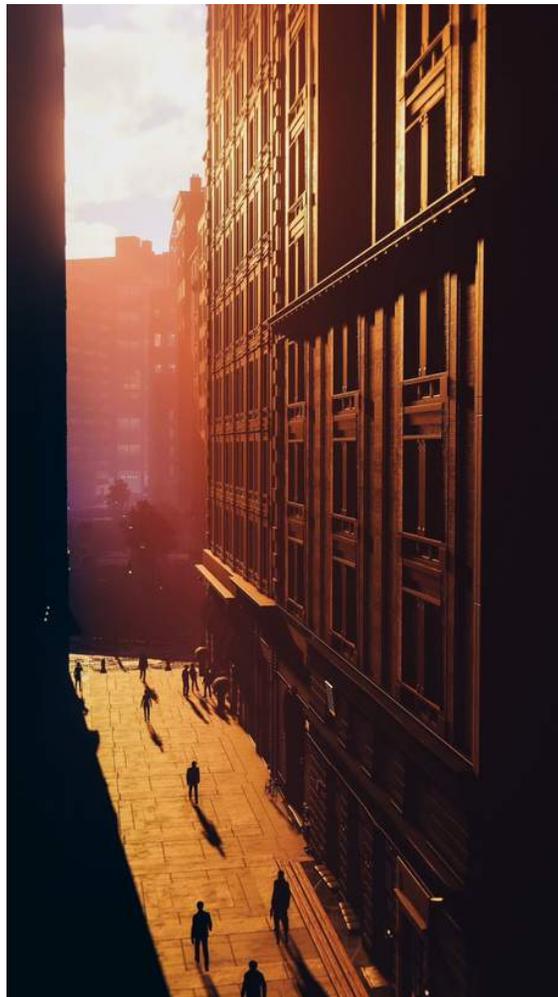
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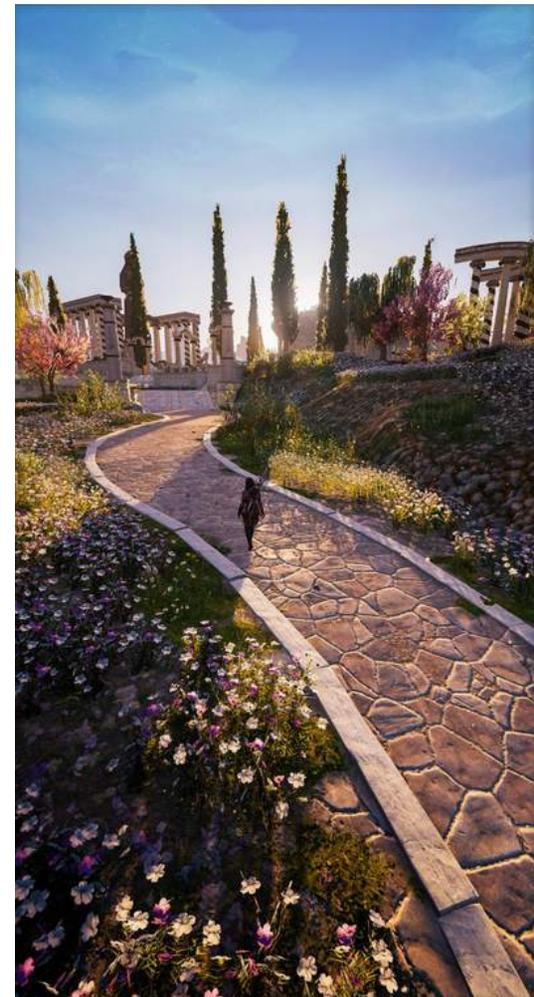
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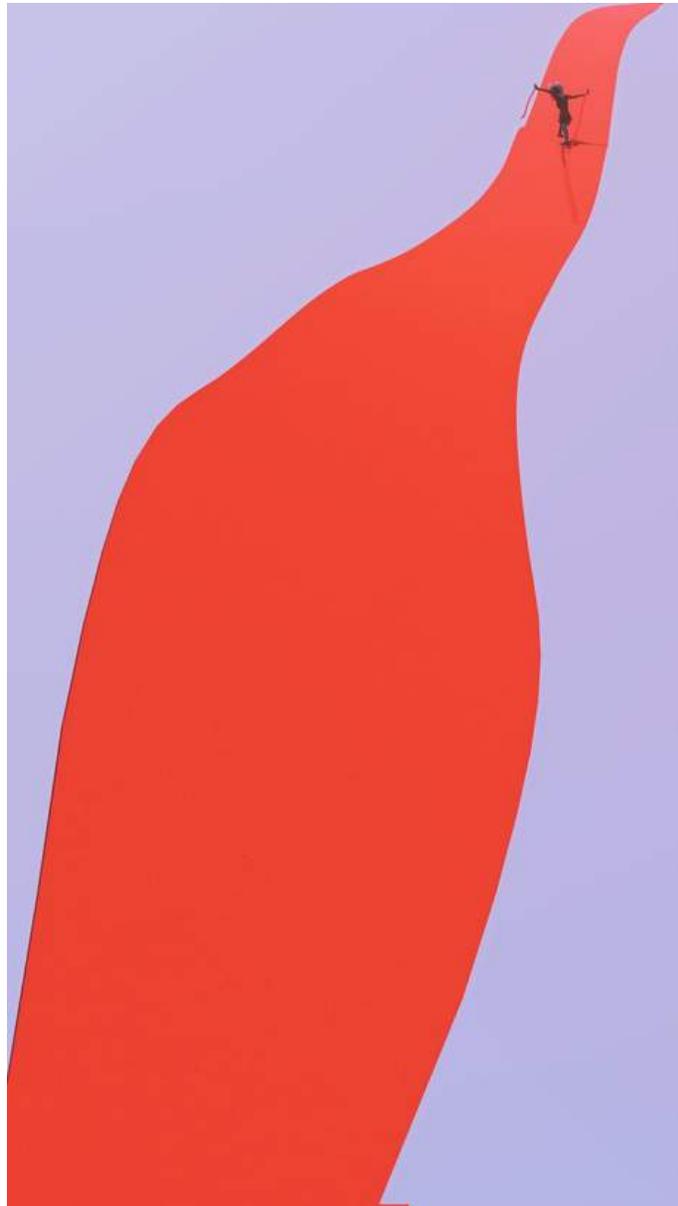
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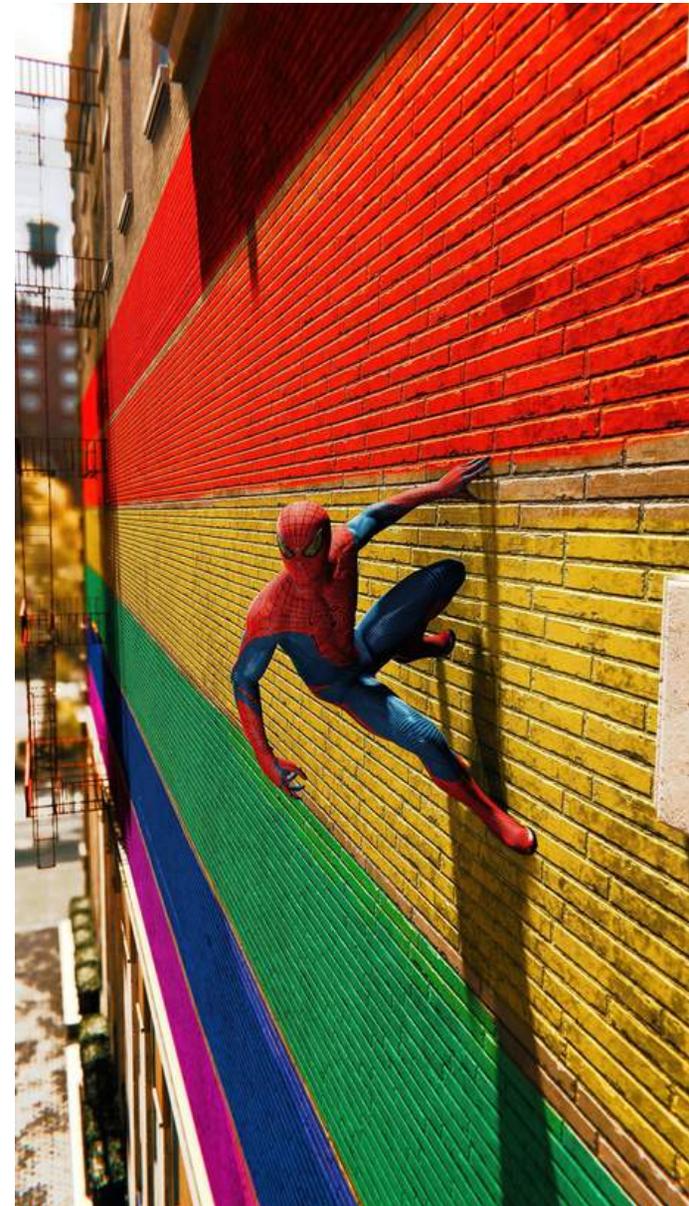
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RALSTONVP



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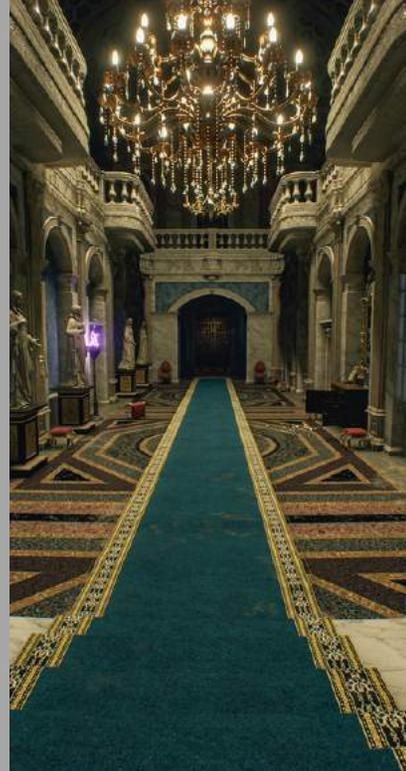
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PURPLEPAMPANO



KINGFOREVER008



MINDJACK3R



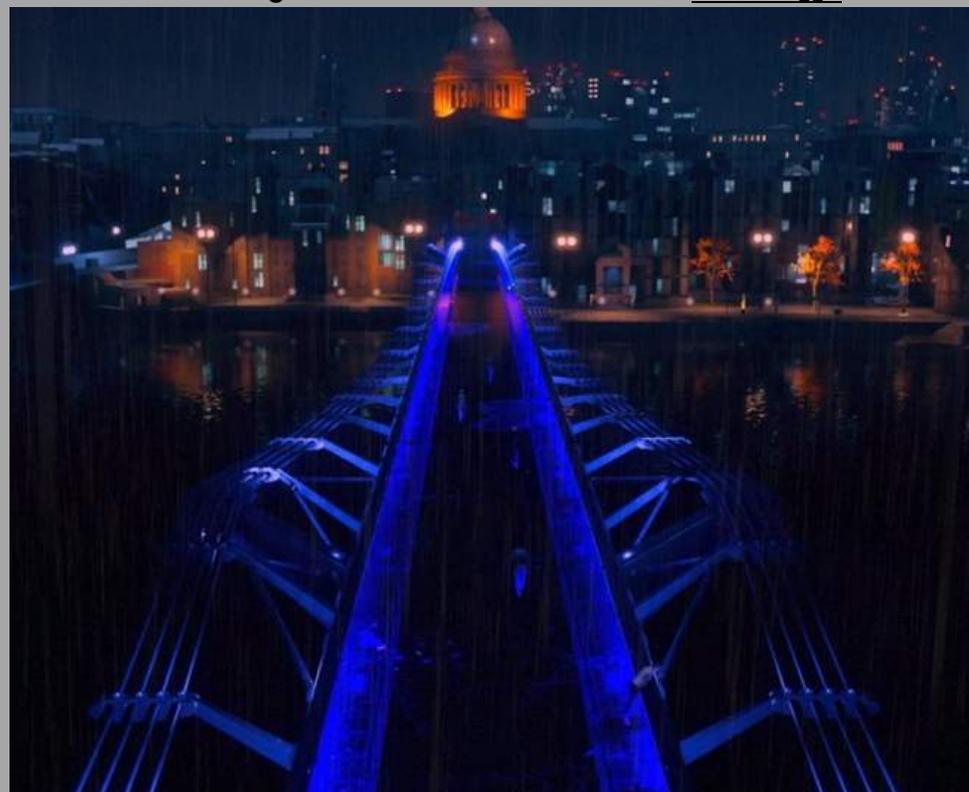
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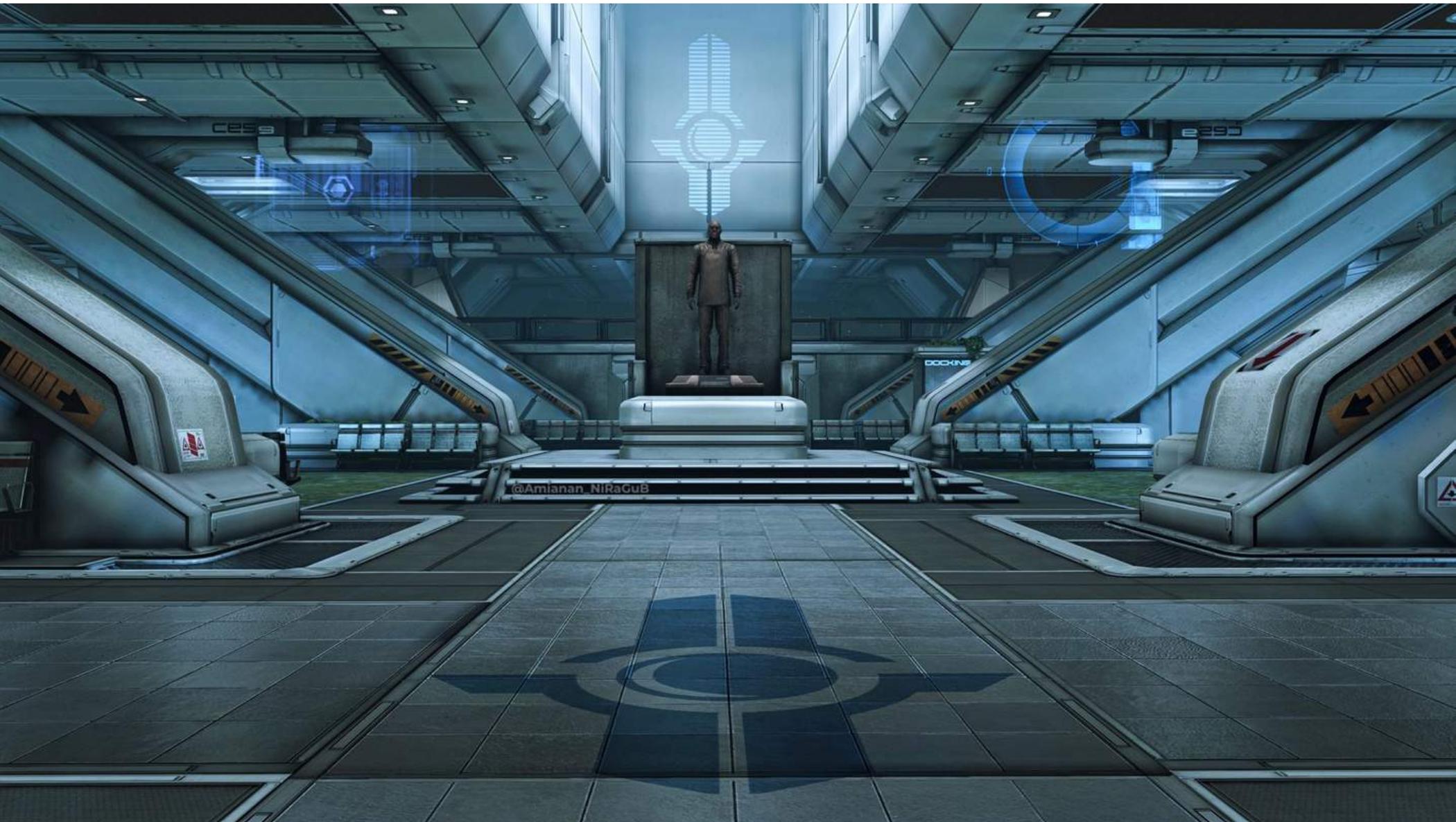
PYMSANZ



TAKASANGAMES



NUNSIRIJUICE



AMIANAN\_NIRAGUB



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