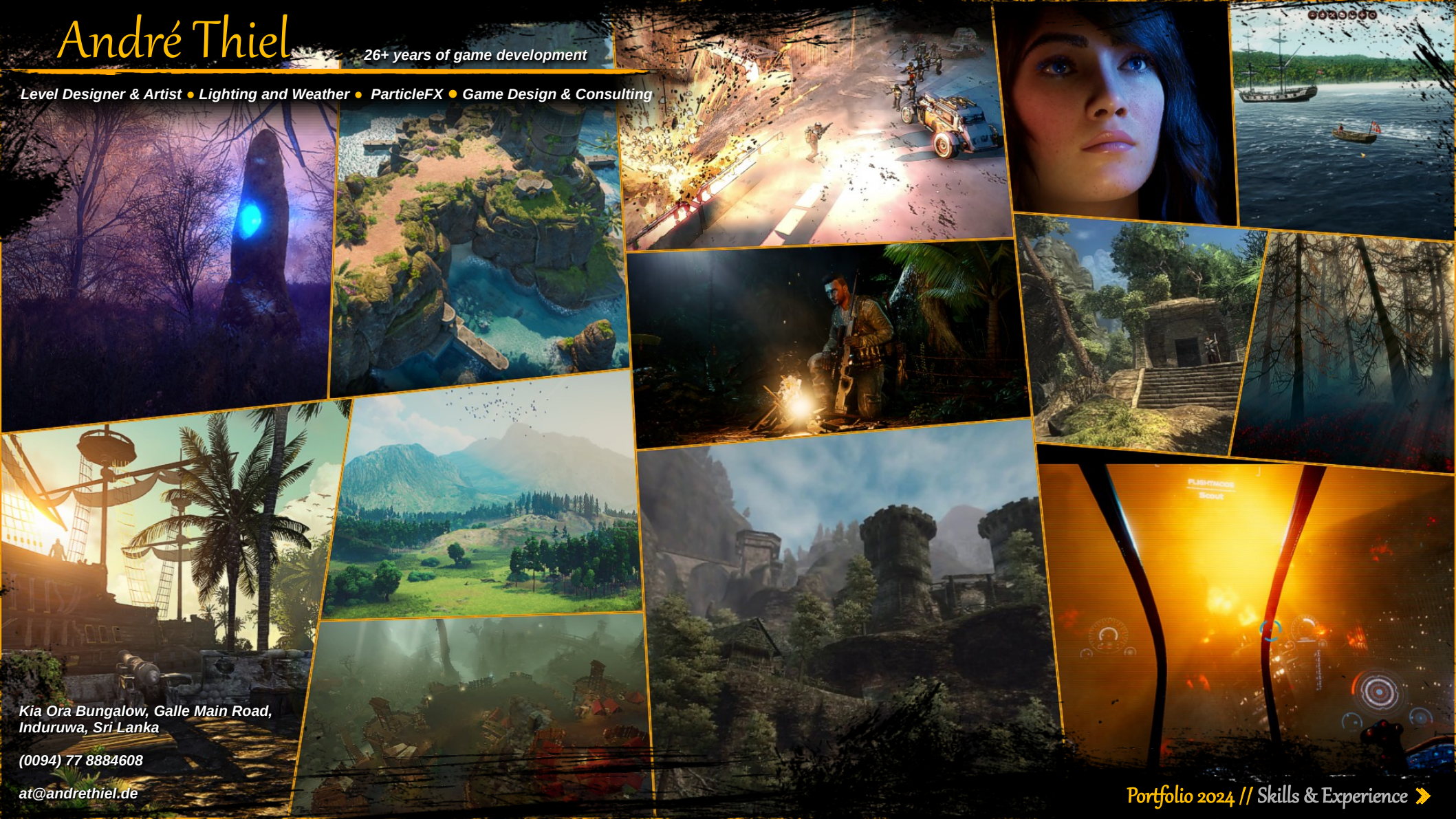


André Thiel

26+ years of game development

Level Designer & Artist • Lighting and Weather • ParticleFX • Game Design & Consulting



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Portfolio 2024 // Skills & Experience ➤

André Thiel // Skills & Experience

Listed are the disciplines I am most skilled at and have the longest experience.

» Level Design

Depending on the game genre and world, my approach can vary a lot. I can create handcrafted, generated or composited heightmaps, both in Unity or Unreal. I am able to work closely to specifications from game design or can go full freestyle by just a few concept arts or mood pictures. In my experience, taking level art into the planning early on results in visually better results and also prevents further iterations later on in a project.

- ▶ Layout and pathing
- ▶ Terrain sculpting and procedural generation
- ▶ Scaling and distances verification
- ▶ Level Art pre-planning for composites
- ▶ Light, mood and tone setup

» Level Art

Usually I define the colors and the tone early on for the main asset classes (plants, rocks, ground textures), lightsources (sun- / moonlight, torches, general lights) and set them up with basic postFX system to nail the atmosphere and tone. With a very keen eye for details I like to dress up locations and also create environment particles for them. A final postFX and color grading path in combination with different light and weather conditions is one of my strongest skills.

- ▶ Asset selection, colorgrading and scale balancing
- ▶ Painting, placement or generation of main asset groups
- ▶ Location planning for events, cutscenes or vista points
- ▶ Detailed location creation and set dressing
- ▶ Main and ambient lighting pass and effect setup
- ▶ PostFX setup and optimization

» Lighting, Weather and Atmosphere

I love colors and how they affect each other in dynamic ways in different locations or conditions. Whether it's a 24 hours day/night cycle or static light with changing fog conditions... I can work on all settings. But I consider my main talents are best used in naturalistic environments with scenic views. With the help of volumetric lights, various fog settings and environment particles, I am able to make „the air thick“ and create striking atmospheres and moods.

- ▶ Time of Day setup
- ▶ Creation of weather states
- ▶ Static or dynamic light and weatherzones
- ▶ Environment particles

» GUI / UI + 2D

Designing and creating various 2D elements for games have often been major parts of my tasks. If it was a menu structure, some (template) key art, or whole element groups for a player HUD, I am able to deliver working results that are in sync with the colors palettes of the game and game design.

- ▶ Design of menus (functional and visual)
- ▶ UI elements (bars, inventories, maps,...)
- ▶ Logos and key arts
- ▶ Screenshots and composites

» Game Design

Most of the times I'm hired these days for game design is to nail down how a game controls and feels. I am familiar with most game systems and how they work and can (re-) create them on a basic level or define the needed variables to programming. I have worked in all kinds of different game genres and can design or contribute whole systems if needed (combat, magic, trading,...).

- ▶ Control, Character and Camera (3C) to define the „feel“
- ▶ Player controllers
- ▶ Gameplay systems and rule definitions
- ▶ Variable constraints
- ▶ Scripting of triggers and events
- ▶ Story and narrative consulting

» Production & Consulting

I often had the opportunity to guide teams in their tasks to achieve the best results in a coordinated way. But I have also formed rookie teams and production pipelines from the ground up. Taking track, prioritize and communicate tasks is part of my daily bread and butter. Further I'm investing time to keep up with current market trends and the industry as a whole.

- ▶ Visual guidance and tone definition
- ▶ Creation of task and QA lists
- ▶ Setup and design of tools and production pipelines
- ▶ General product evaluation
- ▶ Marketing and product research

André Thiel // CV summary

This is a list of all companies and shipped titles I have worked on in the last 26+ years.

➤ Similis Software (1998 - 2002)

- Catan – Die erste Insel (Playstation)
- Autobahnrazer 2 (Playstation)
- Beam Breakers (PC)
- K-Hawk (PC)

▶ Tasks:

Game Design, Worldbuilding, Level Design, Lightning, Interface and Web Design, Video Editing (Intro, Cutscenes, Commercials).

➤ Wings Simulations (2002 - 2005)

- Söldner -Secret Wars (PC)
- Söldner - Marine Corps (PC)

▶ Tasks:

Terrain Generation (XML based), Landscape Textures, Particle Effects, Video Editing (commercials), PR Materials and Web Design

➤ Piranha Bytes (2006-2012)

- Gothic 3 (PC)
- Risen 1 (PC, Xbox)
- Risen 2 - Dark Waters (PC, Xbox, PS2)
- Risen 3 – Prototyping (PC, Xbox)

▶ Tasks:

Worldbuilding, Level Design, Level Art, UI Design and Icons, Particle Effects, Lightning Artist, Terrain generation and sculpting.

➤ UBI Soft / Bluebyte (2012 - 2018)

- Anno Online (PC)
- Champions of Anteria (PC)
- The Settlers (pre-production PC)

▶ Tasks:

Senior Level Artist, Worldbuilding, Map design, Terrain generation and sculpting, Lead Lightning Artist.

Kinaesthetics (Camera and Controls), Atmosphere and Immersion, Tool design, Lecturing inhouse art and tool courses.

➤ Arimac Digital (2018 - 2024)

- Sigiriya VR (PC)
- NIRO (PC)

▶ Tasks:

Unreal Engine: Level Design, Game Design, Producing, Lightning Artist, Particles, UI Artist.

Art and game consulting for mobile and VR projects, Control shemes and cameras, Atmosphere and Immersion, Producing and product documentations.

➤ ReVox (2024 - present)

▶ Tasks:

Unreal Engine: Level Art, Level Design, Game Design, Producing, Lightning Artist, ParticleFX, Production pipeline setup and task coordination.

Shipped Games // Old Games

From 1998 - 2006 I have worked on various projects in the early german gaming industry for PC, Playstation (PSX) and even GameBoy Color.



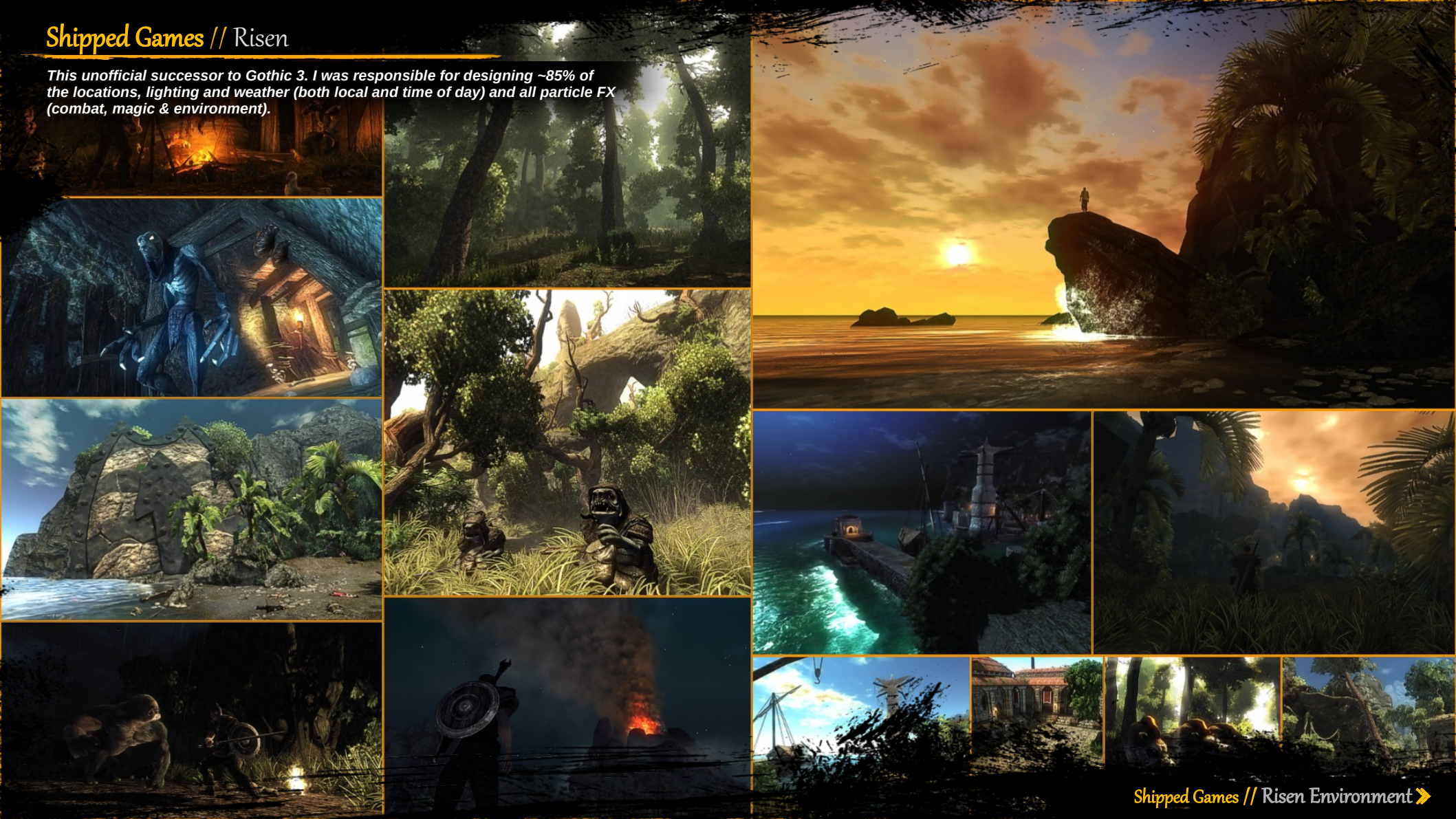
Shipped Games // Gothic 3

2006 I've started working for Piranha Bytes on this legendary RPG. Designing locations and detailing them was my main task.



Shipped Games // Risen

This unofficial successor to Gothic 3. I was responsible for designing ~85% of the locations, lighting and weather (both local and time of day) and all particle FX (combat, magic & environment).



Shipped Games // Risen Environment

Examples of the sunrise colors in different weather systems.



Shipped Games // Risen

I also designed the GUI, including menus and hotbar. For the game I have also created around 300+ icons for magic, all kinds of goods, flasks, rings, armor and weapons.



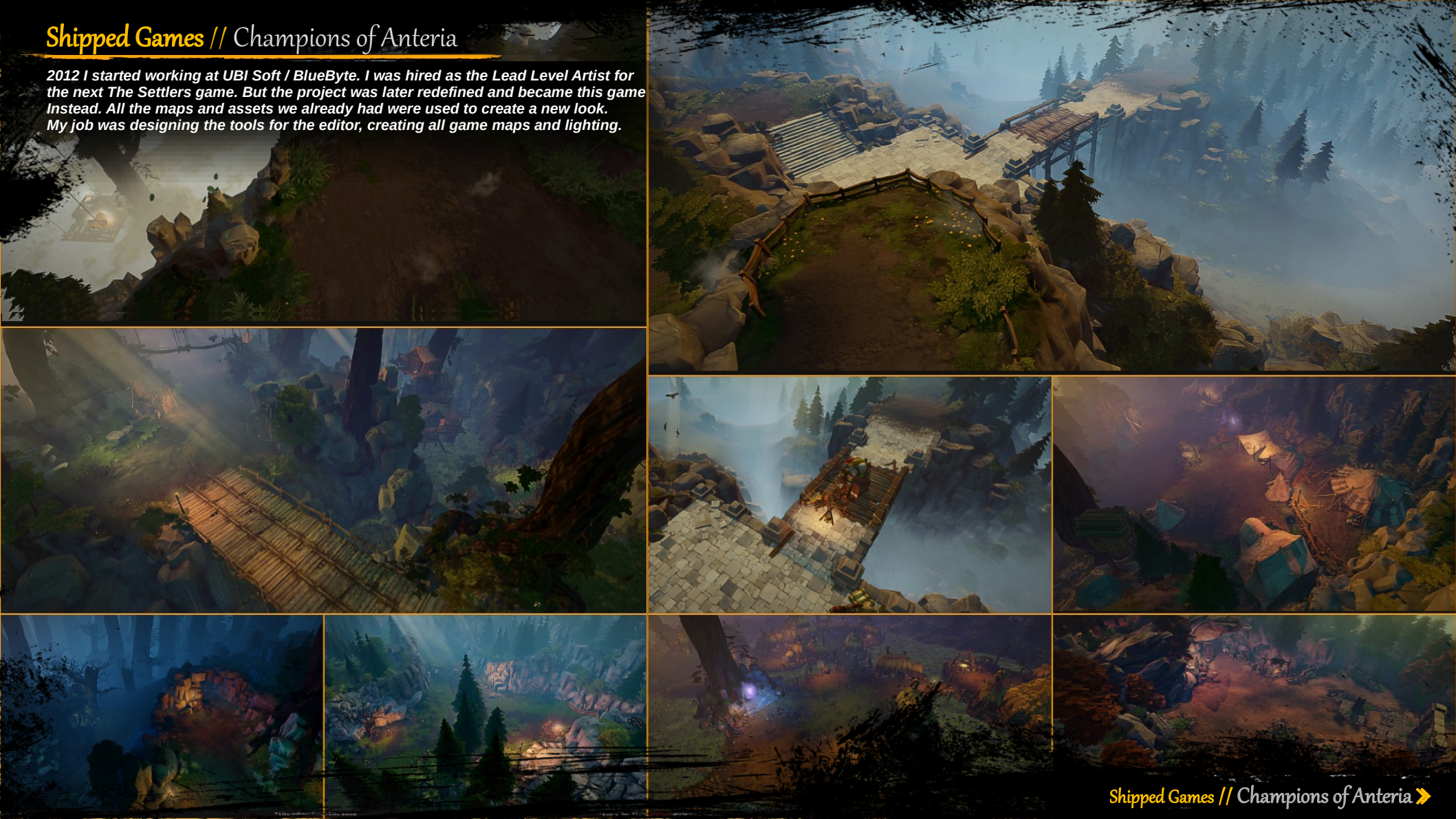
Shipped Games // Risen 2

For this game the engine was redesigned and switched to a heightmap based terrain system. My job was sculpting and designing the locations, set up the new lighting and weather system as well as creating the terrain textures and grasses.



Shipped Games // Champions of Anteria

2012 I started working at UBI Soft / BlueByte. I was hired as the Lead Level Artist for the next The Settlers game. But the project was later redefined and became this game instead. All the maps and assets we already had were used to create a new look. My job was designing the tools for the editor, creating all game maps and lighting.



Shipped Games // Champions of Anteria

I also art directed the textures and assets for the 4 main biomes (Greenland, Autum Meadows, Desert, Northland).



Shipped Games // Champions of Anteria

All objects are handplaced and the terrain was sculpted and painted manually.
Lights and particles especially helped a lot creating vibrant and diverse maps.



Shipped Games // Champions of Anteria

In close collaboration with game design, we created complex pathways and landmark locations to support spatial awareness and tactical decision making. We have evaluated and redesigned a lot of maps. At the end we have used ~25+ of them out of over 50.



Shipped Games // Champions of Anteria

Besides the biomes, my task was also to create event maps and boss arenas. Those needed special care to ensure enough space for player navigation, interesting enemy placement and locations for cutscenes.



Shipped Games // The Settlers – New Allies

Although I am not credited for this, I worked in the terrain generation for the next Settlers game. We had a new engine and needed new tools and a base setup for the art direction. I was able to help with that in the beginning of the project before I left of to new shores. For completion I wanted to list this game here nevertheless, because it still has my influences.



Shipped Games // Nero

2018 I moved to Sri Lanka and had the opportunity to form a local game development team and help them create the first „real“ PC game of the island: an action stealth game about a local war hero. Because the lack of work force here, we had to rely on premade assets for Unreal. The core development team was 4 people most of the time.



Shipped Games // Nero

I worked mainly as the producer, game designer, level designer, level artist (light and particleFX). But I've also created the textures, did the UI and menus and also mixed a lot of the sounds as well directing the soundtrack.



Contract work // Starwalker

*This project is currently in development. I am responsible creating one location:
A giant tree in the middle of a crater lake.*



Contract work // Starwalker

The center area is a small city, surrounded by nature and some key locations. A path leads around the island and up to the tree base. I have no designs for this so I can go absolut freestyle and use what I have to create stunning and detailed locations as well as nice vistas. All is handplaced, sculpted and painted.



Contract work // Starwalker

The light and weather is not applied at this stage. I use a base lighting to adjust and balance all main colors to achieve a coherent look early on.



Contract work // Starwalker

Here is an example of one small spot in the city and how I progress detailing an area. All other locations have the same amount of detail.



Projects & Prototypes // Everwood

A 1st person magical archer game set in fairytale forests where the world gets corrupted over four (realtime) seasons. The terrain is procedurally generated. Full volumetric lighting and realtime snow change the atmosphere over the duration of the game.

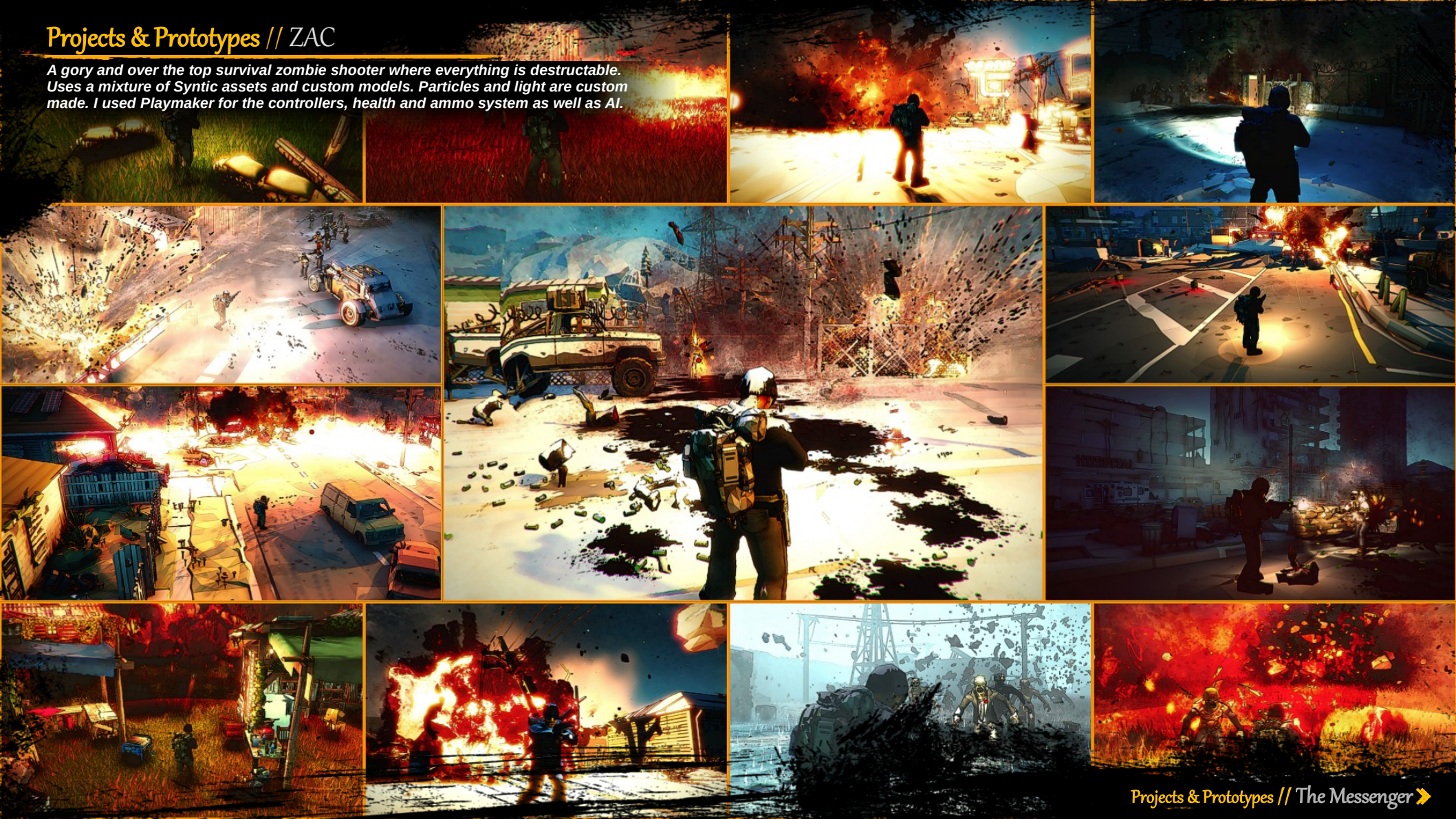
Everwood

Press F1 for Help or Mouse to start



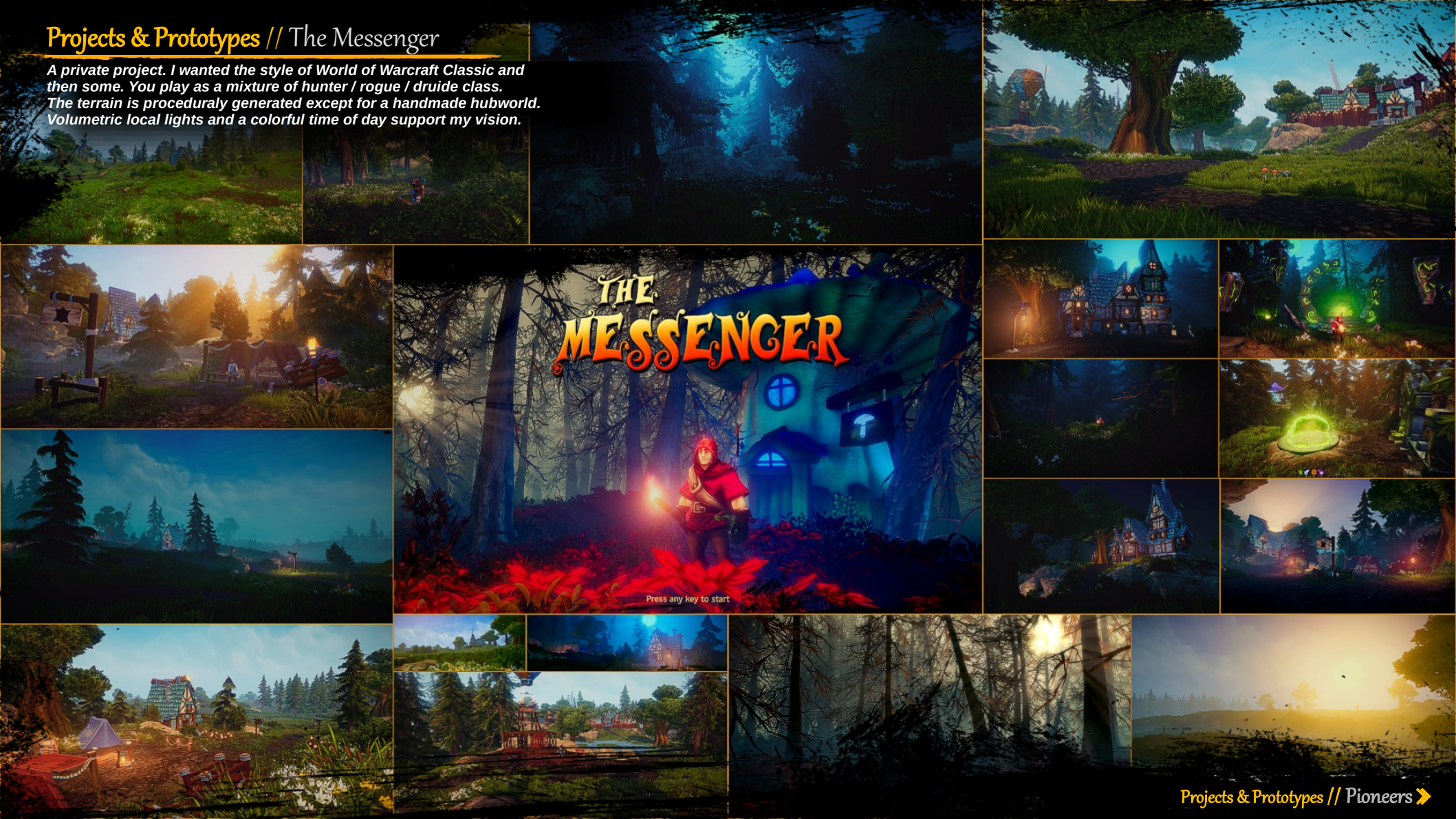
Projects & Prototypes // ZAC

A gory and over the top survival zombie shooter where everything is destructible. Uses a mixture of Syntic assets and custom models. Particles and light are custom made. I used Playmaker for the controllers, health and ammo system as well as AI.



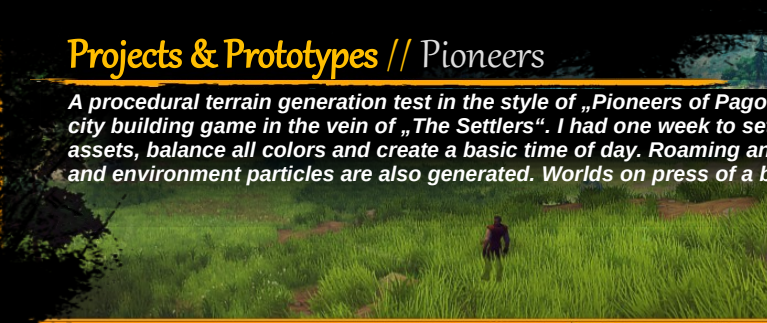
Projects & Prototypes // The Messenger

A private project. I wanted the style of World of Warcraft Classic and then some. You play as a mixture of hunter / rogue / druide class. The terrain is procedurally generated except for a handmade hubworld. Volumetric local lights and a colorful time of day support my vision.



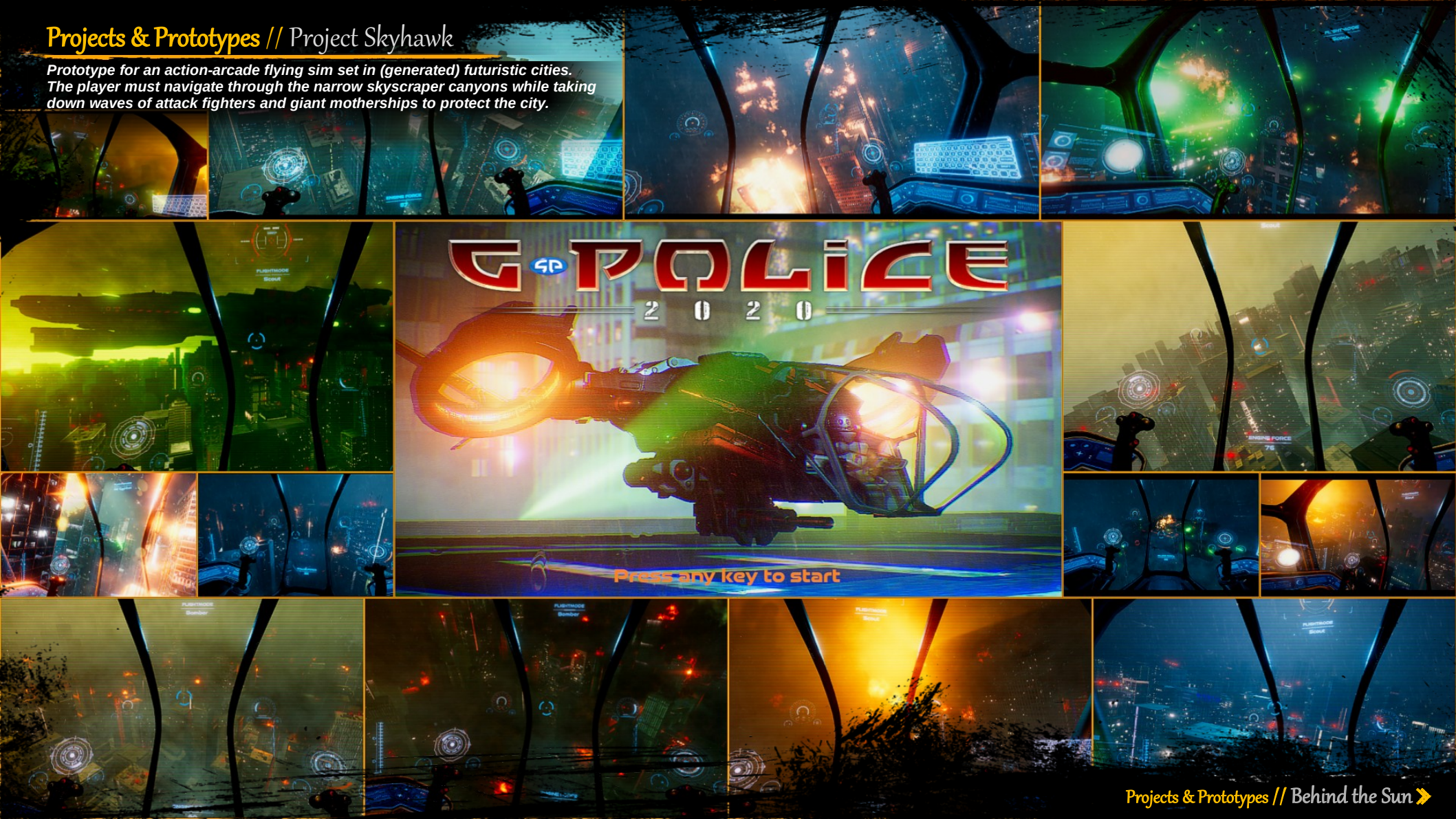
Projects & Prototypes // Pioneers

A procedural terrain generation test in the style of „Pioneers of Pagonia“, a city building game in the vein of „The Settlers“. I had one week to set up all assets, balance all colors and create a basic time of day. Roaming animals and environment particles are also generated. Worlds on press of a button.



Projects & Prototypes // Project Skyhawk

Prototype for an action-arcade flying sim set in (generated) futuristic cities. The player must navigate through the narrow skyscraper canyons while taking down waves of attack fighters and giant motherships to protect the city.



Projects & Prototypes // Behind the Sun

Prototype of a colony building, sailing and exploration game. A mix of the Anno games, Pirates and AC: Black Flack. The generated game world is fully zoomable from the map to the ground. These are shots from a proof of concept / performance test build.



Thank you ! ➤

A collage of 14 screenshots from the video game Far Cry 3, showcasing various environments and gameplay elements. The screenshots include: a tropical beach with a ship; a close-up of a woman's face; a boat on the water; a character in a jungle; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest.

A collage of 15 screenshots from the video game Far Cry 3, showcasing various environments and gameplay elements. The screenshots include: a tropical beach with a ship; a close-up of a woman's face; a boat on the water; a character in a jungle; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave.

A collage of 15 screenshots from the video game Far Cry 3, showcasing various environments and gameplay elements. The screenshots include: a tropical beach with a ship; a close-up of a woman's face; a boat on the water; a character in a jungle; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave; a character in a forest; a character in a cave.

A collage of 15 screenshots from the video game Far Cry 3, showcasing various environments and gameplay elements. The screenshots include: a tropical beach with a ship, a close-up of a woman's face, a car chase, a soldier in a jungle, a large stone structure, a tropical island, a tropical beach with a ship, a tropical island, a tropical beach with a ship, a tropical island, a tropical beach with a ship, a tropical island, a tropical beach with a ship, a tropical island, and a tropical beach with a ship.

A collage of 15 screenshots from the video game Far Cry 3, showcasing various environments and gameplay elements. The screenshots include: a tropical beach with a ship, a close-up of a woman's face, a character in a vehicle, a character in a jungle, a character in a cave, a character in a forest, a character in a field, a character in a mountain, a character in a valley, a character in a river, a character in a lake, a character in a forest, a character in a field, a character in a mountain, and a character in a valley.