

Education for Games Games for Education

Women in Games 2008

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www.gamescourse.co.uk

What skills are needed to work in the games industry?

Are they provided by higher education, and are they options taken up by women?

A talk based upon my experience

- As a female art student
- As a background artist in Children's TV production
- As an environmental artist in the Games Industry
- And recently as a Senior Lecturer in Games Design at UCLAN.

Acquiring the skills

- As an art student in the late 70's, I learned the basis for these skills in an **incidental** manner
- My training and experience in children's TV then **prepared** me for a role as an artist in the games industry.

In comparison...today...

- Skills for working in the games industry are now more immediately **accessible** through Higher Education.
- Choices for a career in games are now more **intentional** than incidental
- Students have a much more **structured** and considered curriculum which is specially **designed** for their aspirations as games designers and for industry.

Skills required in the games industry...

- I plan to **track** my career path briefly from my own experience of higher education to
- How I came to work as a digital artist on many successful games.
- To show how my experience of the games design industry can be an example to other female games students, **encouraging** them to succeed.

A pathway...

- I will show examples from my early years in children's animation for Thames TV...
- to an “**apparent**” change of direction where I started work with a group of brilliant, young games developers, Traveller's Tales Ltd.

- I found that **gender** and age difference between myself and my colleagues was never an issue.
- In my opinion the main issue surrounding women in the games industry is **spreading the word** that it's a great place for anyone to work, boys and girls alike.

- Comparing my **early** experience in games with that of the graduates we teach today...
- Perhaps we can say early games developers were like “**explorers**” and today's games students are “**colonizing** the once uncharted territory”.

Unknown territory

- I followed a path into an industry which didn't **exist** when I studied for my degree.
- My path into games was not certain and I was unsure of the **opportunities** available.
- The skills required for use in new technology were also **uncharted** and waiting to be explored.

Unknown territory

- Today's path into the games industry is now a more **certain** route for those who display talent and have studied an appropriate games design course
- The industry is still **growing** and there are plenty of **opportunities** for students with skill who are prepared to work hard
- The industry is now more **established** with a history of it's own which gives a more definitive list of skills required for students to succeed.

Background



Art College
*Study at Manchester
Polytechnic*

*First class BA (hons)
Graphic design with
Illustration,*

*Post Graduate
Certificate in Education*

*Focus on drawing skills,
story telling, painting,
networking and
understanding the market.*



Time in Industry

Specialist skills in background design and artwork for animation including watercolours and many other media.

3D digital artwork and graphics for games.



Cosgrove Hall Films Ltd. Thames TV

Background artist –Illustrator-Designer

Wind in the Willows

Duckula.

Dangermouse.

Bug Bears. Truckers.

Victor and Hugo. The B.F.G.

The Fool, the World and the Flying ship.

Freelance Background Artist.

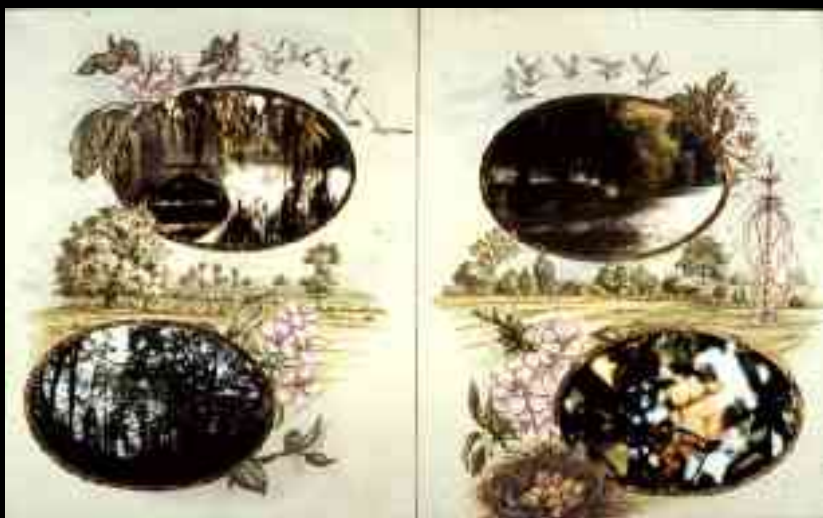
Avenger Penguins; Cosgrove Hall/Thames TV

Legend of Lochnagar

H.R.H. Prince Charles. Dave Edwards Studios. BBC



Cosgrove Hall Films...



Cosgrove Hall Films...



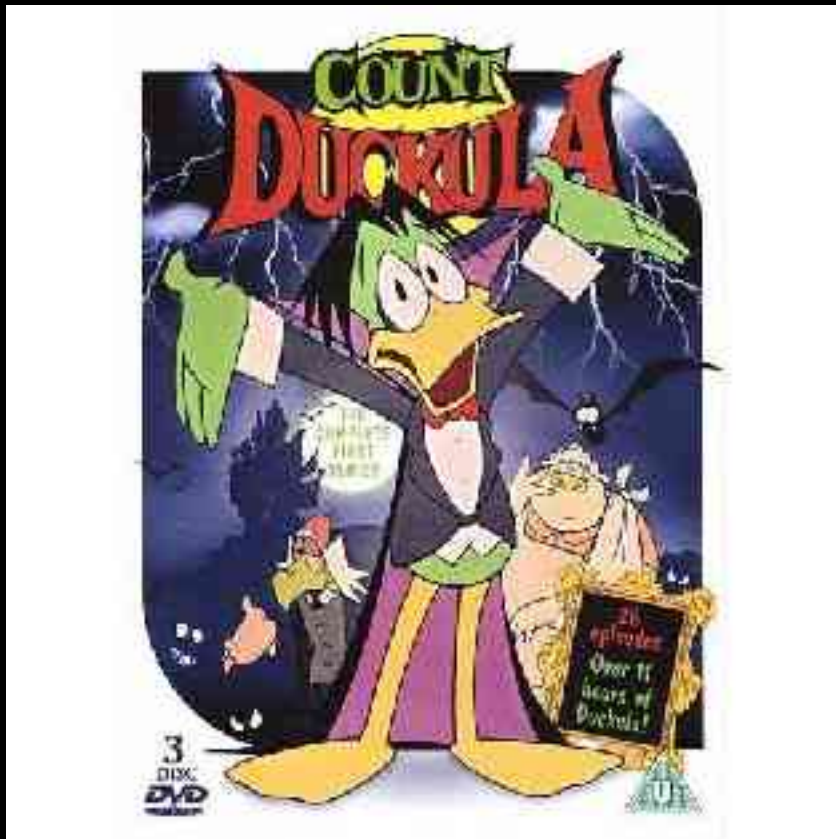


Cosgrove Hall ...continued



DANGER MUSE





Freelance work...Prince Charles' Legend of Lochnagar



The Tooth Fairy



Travellers Tales Ltd.

Digital artist for video games

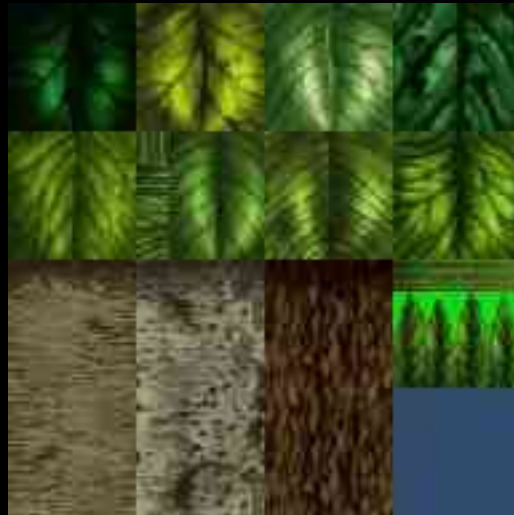
- *Mickey Mania - Disney video game*
 - *Toy Story - Disney video game.*
- *Shadow Master - Sony video game*
 - *Rascal - Sony video game.*
 - *Bugs Life.- Disney video game*
- *Sonic Racing - Sega video game.*
 - *Haven - Sony video game.*
- *Muppet Racemania.- Henson Interactive video game*
 - *Toy Story 2.-Disney video game*
 - *Buzz Lightyear.- Disney video game*
- *Crash Bandicoot the Wrath of Cortex.- Universal Studios video game*
 - *Finding Nemo.- Disney video game*
- *Lego Starwars.- Giant Entertainment video game*
- *Lego Starwars2.- T-tales video game*



Early 90's at Traveller's Tales Ltd



Traveller's Tales Ltd. Texturing.

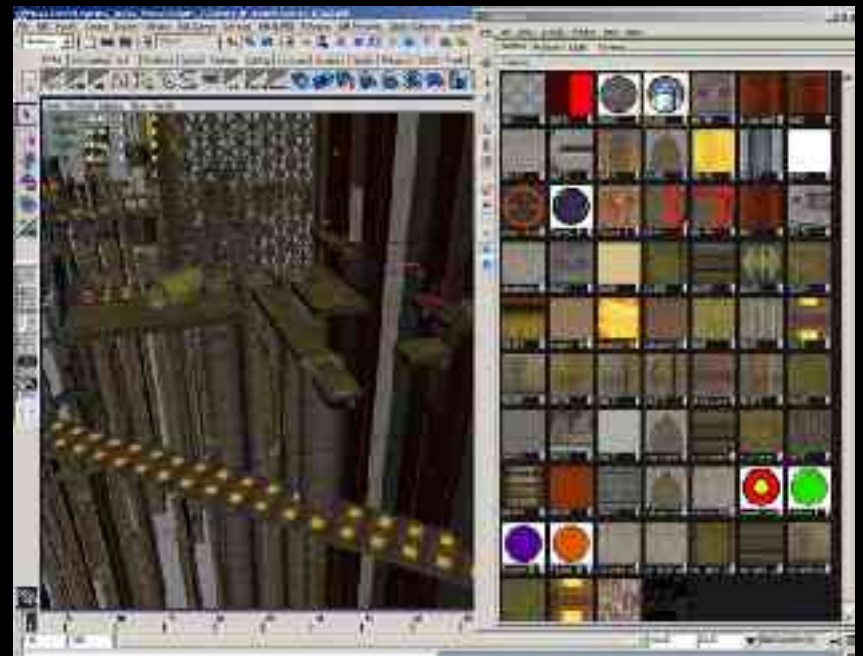
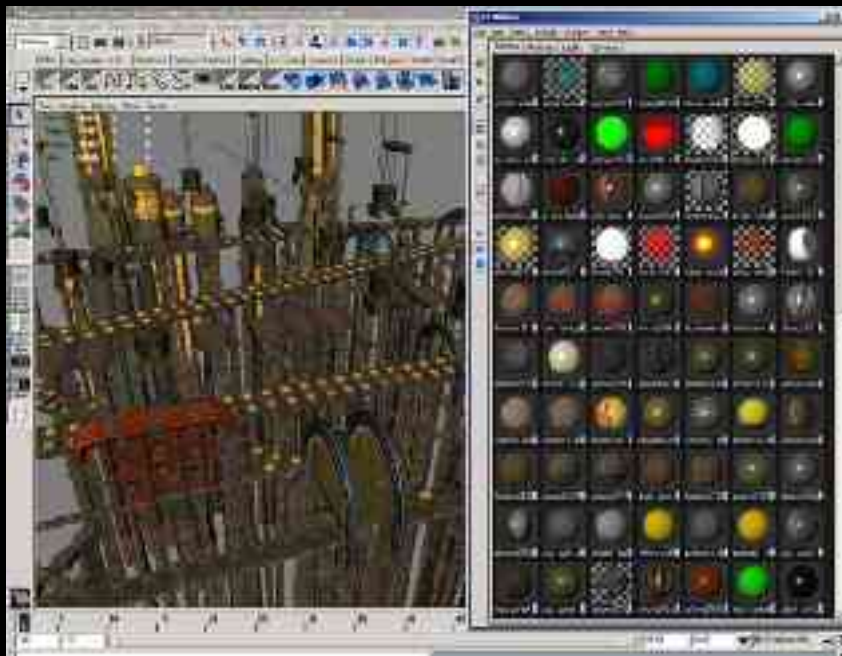
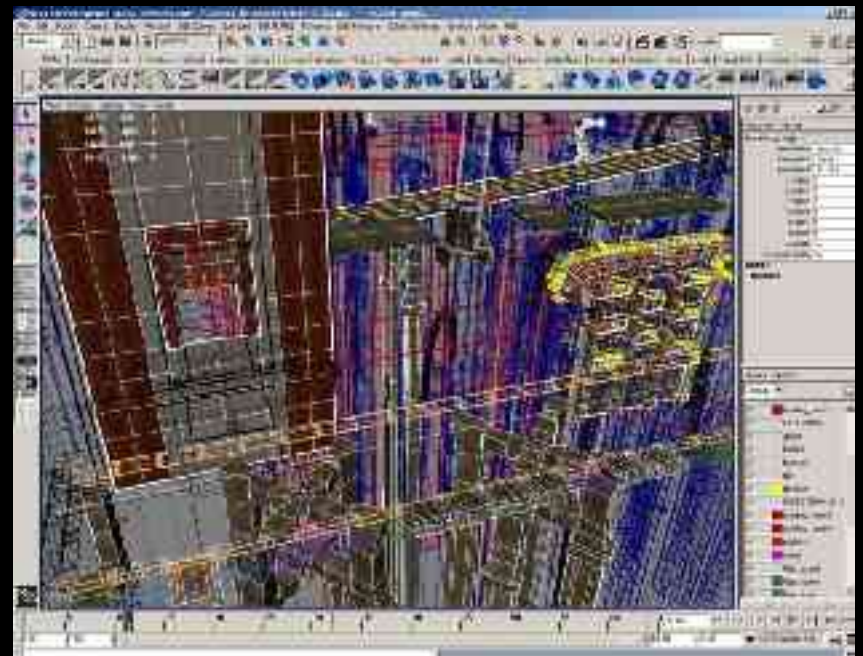
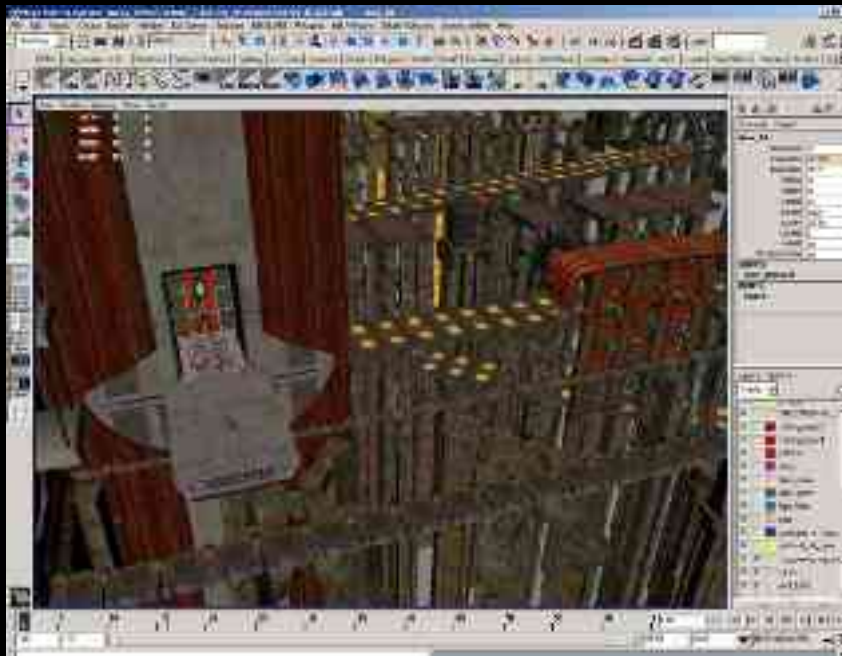


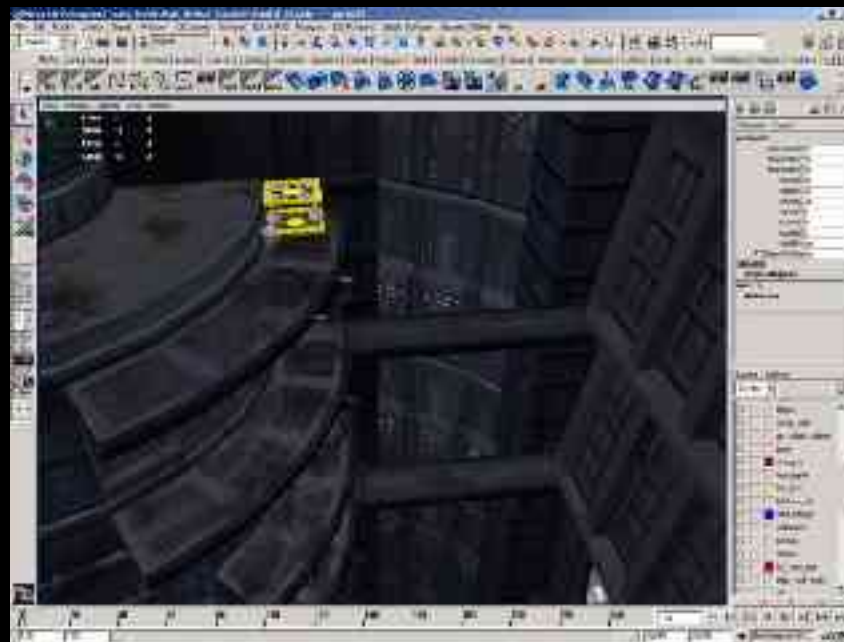
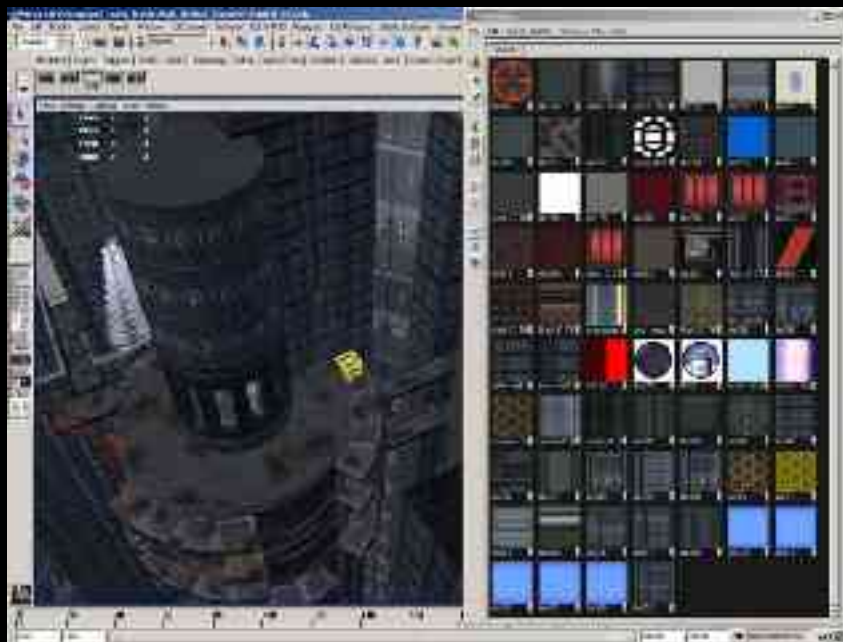
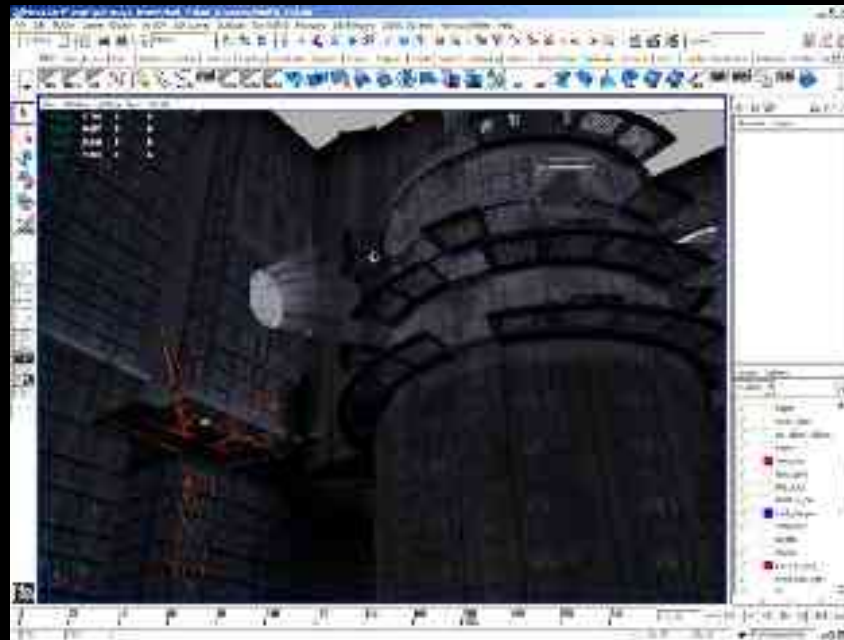
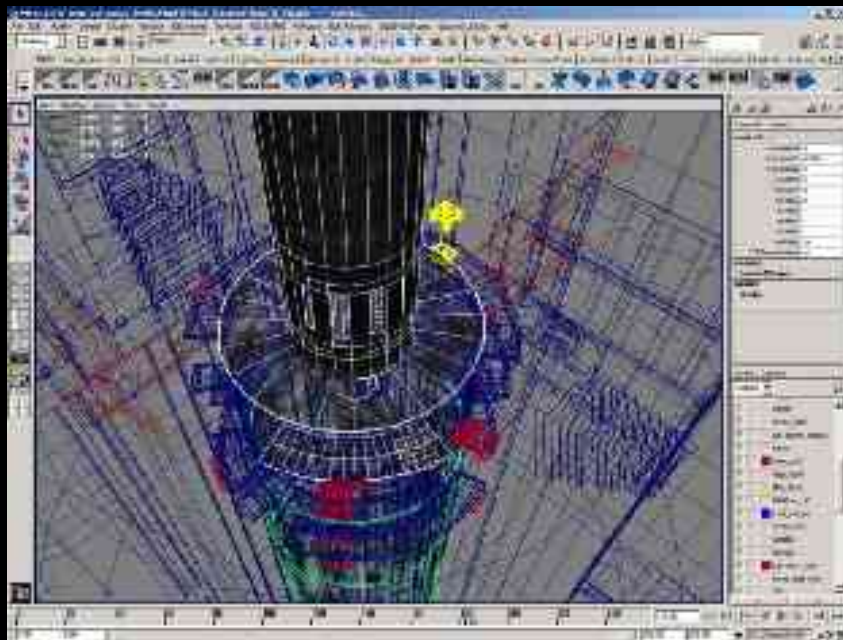
Traveller's Tales Ltd. Modelling



Lego Starwars







Traveller's Tales Ltd Lego Starwars 2



Traveller's Tales Ltd... Lego team



Traveller's Tales... ECTS London



Traveller's Tales... E3... Santa Monica L.A.



Traveller's Tales... Legoland, Billund, Denmark



And now... Games at UCLAN ... Degree Show 07





BA (Hons) Games Design
MA Games Design

Game Design • Game Art





What is the course structure?

Simply put the course covers three main areas of activity:

Drawing

This ranges from sketching as an aid to creative thinking to develop initial ideas' to the production of finished concept art for publication.

Digital modelling and Animation

This covers the game specific requirements for developing digital assets for games.

Game Mechanic Design

Thinking of scenarios and subjects for games can be easy, but developing the mechanics, rules and methods by which a game is delivered is a complex task specific to the discipline.



We have a dedicated PC lab where we run mainly Autodesk Maya 8 Complete and Adobe Photoshop CS2 (The full Creative Suite)



Maya 8.5 PLE (Public Learning Edition) is available as a [free download](#) offers,

'Almost every feature found in the full commercial version of Autodesk Maya Complete 8.5'

Programs such as Autodesk 3D Studio Max and Adobe Premier are also available across the University network.



In addition to this we have a big pile of Wacom Intuos3 Graphics Tablets for use in the PC lab.



We are currently using Epic's 'UnrealEd' as a teaching tool for Game Design and Art Asset visualisation.



We also have a 'Lecture' and 'Drawing' Studio for non digital work which we feel is just as important.





Staff Team

The staff team consist of a mix of staff that are skilled in design education as well as possessing significant experience of commercial games design. A range of visiting staff with educational and professional backgrounds broadens and supports the input to the student experience

Josh

Bev

Jim





Publishers/Developers Staff have been involved with...

Travellers Tales Ltd

Disney

Universal Studios

Virgin Interactive

Psygnosis

Sony

Henson Interactive

Electronic Arts

Warthog

Universal Vivendi

Revolution Studios

Acclaim

Warner Brothers

Cosgrove Hall

Thames TV

Thames and Hudson



A list of some BA (Hons) Games Design Graduates, employment and in what capacity

Travellers Tales Ltd

Travellers Tales – Fusion

Travellers Tales –Slough

Ninja Theory LTD

Eurocom

THQ – Brisbane

Evolution Studios

Stainless Games

Onteca Interactive Media

Santoon Productions Inc

Concept Artist

Designer

QA Tester

Designer/Artist/Modeler

Artist/Modeler

Modeler/Animator



A slice of life from the BA (Hons) / MA Games Design Studio



A shot of the Drawing Studio



Students working in the PG Lab



Working with Unreal.



Digital Picture Frames and a typical Pin-up of Student work

Presentation;

A group of Year Three BA(hons) Games Design Students take part in a small 'Crit' and discuss work on the wall with Jim





Magic The Gathering
Non Digital Games are often just as important in terms of understanding 'game mechanics'

A game of Citidel

Like other card based games out there!



Tom, a Year Three Games Design Student - Very happy with his Citidel turn



A Guitar Hero

A group of First Year BA(Hons) Game Design Students analyzing an XBox 360 Title

It is work - Honest!





A game of 'Zombies' and a bunch of 'Zombies' - on the right of the picture!

One of the Course 'Toy Cupboards'

The least messy!



Sketchwork;

Rob draws something hideous - again!



Design work in the studio.

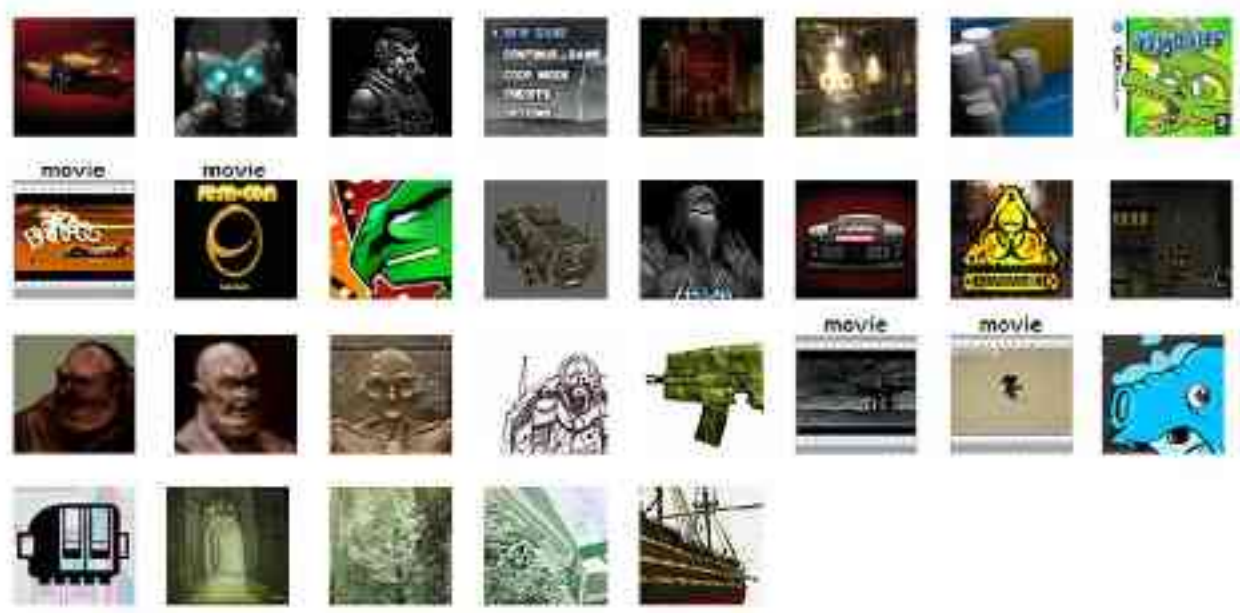






www.uclan.ac.uk/games

Games Design Year 3 Gallery

Game Design • Game Art

A multi-disciplinary team of female design practitioners based in the School of Design, UCLAN, have come together to explore issues surrounding gamers.





- The Games BY Girls group intends to explore the possibilities of not only a broader market but also the potential for different subjects, content and alternative **purposes** of games.
- Through **research** the group aims to gain an insight into what attracts a universal audience.
- They intend to bring their skills to bear to develop and trial such games with the long term goal of bringing them into the arena of **education**.

Universal appeal

- With the advent of the Wii and increase in casual games, **action** based content is becoming more popular and this is attracting female players and designers.
- In next generation games, you can have freedom, power and take control or sit back and be fed a film like experience. The **emotional** aspect and storyline plays a large part in making game play meaningful.
- The superb quality of the visuals is giving a **cinematic** experience to opening sequences and cut scenes

Opportunities for boys and girls

- We now see Animators, concept artists, game designers, modelers and musicians coming **together** happily to provide awe inspiring games.
- I believe the quality of this interactive medium will increasingly evolve until the whole thing, from music, script, cinematic storyline, action and game play are fully **integrated**.
- As more animators and artists are required for next generation titles, **female** animators and designers will begin to naturally identify the job prospects in the industry

Girls will naturally work in games

- There has never been a more exciting time for women to enter the games design world and there are jobs out there for those with talent.
- We have seen an increase in the number of female students applying for our games design course.
- Hopefully, women like myself who have worked in the industry will mark a pathway for girls to follow.