

Tom Velebny

Technical Artist / Houdini Specialist

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I'm a Technical Artist / Houdini Specialist with more than 18 years of experience in the games industry, the majority of which has been spent in Lead or Senior Artist roles. In 2022 I made the shift to full time Tech Art.

As a generalist I have always enjoyed the kind of hard tasks that would let me solve problems in multiple areas, crossing into Tech Art. From the bread and butter modelling and texturing, UI/UX, shader work or scripting to procedural modelling and tools creation in Houdini and Houdini Engine, which has become my specialization.

I have also hired, managed and mentored a team of artists and outsourced art production, but what motivates me most is learning new techniques, workflows and tools as I am 100% self-taught, an expert-on-demand, if you will.

Skills

- Procedural modelling and texturing, automation, scripting
- High poly, low poly, hard surface and organic modelling, sculpting
- Virtual reality, UI/UX, optimization, photogrammetry
- Management, mentoring, excellent oral and written communication

Software Proficiency

- Houdini, Maya, 3D Studio Max, ZBrush, Mudbox
- Substance Painter, Substance Designer, Photoshop, XD
- VEX, Python, UE Blueprints, MaxScript, JavaScript, HTML5, CSS3
- Unreal 4 & 5, Unity, Real Virtuality, RenderDoc

Professional experience

As I have recently switched roles from Art to Tech Art I would like to highlight the ways in which I have been functioning as a Tech Artist throughout my career. You'll find the relevant tasks under each role *highlighted like this*.

Smilegate Barcelona (2022 - Present)

I'm currently working as a Tech Artist, creating tools in Houdini and Unreal 5, while also researching and prototyping new technologies required for an unannounced AAA open world game.

Bohemia Interactive Simulations (2021)

Worked as a Lead Environment Artist, engaged in populating the world for the whole-earth simulator [VBS Blue](#) used by all major armies around the globe.

Force Field Entertainment (2019 - 2021)

Worked as a Senior Artist on [National Geographic Explore VR \(2019\)](#) for Oculus Quest, a game that lets you experience the highly detailed environments of Antarctica and Machu Picchu in VR.

- Responsible for the majority of the Hand UI and Camera UI:
 - Layout, styling, iconography
 - *VR interactions through Blueprints*

- Helped brainstorm various UX systems and gameplay mechanics
- *Profiled and optimized performance using RenderDoc and a custom HLOD tool*
- Created new models based on existing photogrammetry assets
- Acted as an interim lead on multiple occasions

Further responsibilities included working on internal projects and demos for publishers, using Unreal Engine for the Oculus Quest 1 and 2. My role had a wide range from complex asset creation to UI/UX or *shader work*.

Since 2020 I have been advocating for, and using, Houdini and Houdini Engine in Virtual Reality pipelines on tasks such as procedural modelling, terrain creation and asset optimization.

Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe (2016 - 2019)

Worked as a Senior Artist on an unannounced title for Playstation VR at Sony, Manchester, UK.

- Visual design, prototyping, modelling and texturing of enemy vehicles and hero assets
- *Created tools for converting Unreal landscapes into multiple meshes, optimizing and merging them with custom road networks using procedural modelling in Houdini*
- Iterated on various UI systems including HUD, minimap and inventory

Bohemia Interactive (2015)

Worked externally as a Senior Artist contractor on a civilian vehicle model for the [Arma III Apex](#) expansion, from scratch to finish, with a great degree of autonomy.

Bohemia Interactive Simulations (2007 - 2015)

Produced and managed production of artwork for multiple releases of the serious game [Virtual Battlespace \(VBS\)](#) used as training software by all major armies around the world including the US Army, US Marine Corps, UK MoD and others. *Acted as a Tech Artist, creating tools, scripts and pipelines for the art team.* Helped the company grow from 10 to 250 employees in 6 offices worldwide.

Lead Artist (2010 - 2015), Senior Artist (2009), Artist (2007 - 2008)

- Created models, textures, materials and set standards to be followed by other artists
- Reviewed and approved all artwork from internal and outsourced artists
- *Checked all artwork to be technically optimized for performance according to strict specs*
- *Wrote scripts for model error checking and automation of the most-performed tasks*
- Taught and documented the specifics of VBS artwork creation
- Proposed solutions and provided time estimates for customer contracts
- Cooperated with other department leads to meet goals and deadlines
- Managed a team of artists and project schedules
- Managed outsourcing companies including contracts and deliveries
- Interviewed and hired new artists
- *Tested and improved proprietary tools used by artists*
- *Maintained content library of more than 5000 models*

Bohemia Interactive (2005 - 2006)

Worked as an artist on the sequel to the award-winning game [Operation Flashpoint](#). Created city environments from start to finish, utilizing and refining the proprietary system of destructible buildings. Modelled and textured objects ranging from props to entire houses, *wrote scripts for 3DSMax*. Took photos of real life environments later used as references and texture source material.

Various Companies (1998 - 2005)

Worked as a graphic designer for various companies in different roles. Created online advertising campaigns. Designed and *coded webpages, flash interactive animations* and ad banners. Defined and maintained the look of an online news portal. Worked as a compositor on an animated cartoon movie. Played, reviewed and wrote about computer games for a print magazine.

Games Credited

- National Geographic Explore VR (2019)
- ArmA III Apex (2016)
- VBS3 (2015)
- ArmA III (2013)
- VBS2 v2.00 (2012)
- Take On Helicopters (2011)
- ArmA II: Operation Arrowhead (2010)
- Virtual Battlespace 2 (2007)
- Operation Flashpoint 2 (not published)