Jenny Freeman

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR

Canada

I am an Art Director with 25 years of game industry experience.
I started my Art Directing career working on AAA titles and transitioned to mobile for the last six years. My objectives, regardless of the subject matter, are to surprise, engage and delight our players using visual language, whether 2D, 3D or animation.

I love playing games and being part of teams creating games!

Outside work, I am an avid dressmaker and clothes designer, following the latest trends to create my clothes.
I also love gardening and have been taming a quarter-acre plot of land, creating a beautiful floriferous landscape.

Games Experience

Senior Art Director

EA Canada

Vancouver
Nov 2018 - Present

As the Senior Art Director of our New IP mobile studio, I am responsible for managing a team of concept artists and illustrators, UI artists, technical artists, animators, and UX designers.
I also partner and review visuals for our games with our central art teams, including environments, characters and rigging.
The teams I manage are multi-disciplinary and include contractors, external studios, and a core internal team of artists.

My skills include:
- Art Directing Live Art production for branded games.
- Creating new IP for mobile games and art directing already established brands.
- The ability to conceptualize new delightful experiences for our players by partnering with other creatives and mobile experts on our teams.
- Career management, training and mentorship for our art teams, ensuring we get the best out of everyone on the team by creating a safe space to work in and a place to learn and grow.
- Software skills include - Unity, Maya, Adobe Suite

Title I have been working on in this role:
- FIFA Mobile
- UFC Mobile
- New IP - 3 x undisclosed titles

Art Director

Jun 2006 - Nov 2018

Electronic Arts - Vancouver Studio

Art Director on many AAA titles which include:
- UFC
- Fight Night Champion
- Fight Night 4
- Grand Slam Tennis 2
- FIFA Street 3
- FIFA 2006

Responsibilities on previous games as an Art Director:
- Responsible for the final look of the game from visual design phase, and concept design, to the completed game.
- Finding and building teams, from concept artists, animators, and cinematic teams and advising on outsourcing companies.
- Setting detailed visual targets and quality targets for all aspects of the game; creating style guides and mood boards and communicating this vision to all involved.
- Reviewing of all art assets in the game and thus ensuring good consistent quality throughout.
- Liaising with marketing, PR, centrally managed teams, outsourcers, and contractors, and representing the company at conventions, on blogs and in interviews.
- Giving career feedback and helping to grow artists' careers within the company. Giving art guidance and enabling artists to take on more ownership of their work.
- Assuring visual priorities match with production and game design priorities.
- On AAA console, responsible for and final reviewer of cinematics, graphic transitions and lip-synching.

Games Artist

Oct 2002 - Jun 2006

Electronic Arts - Vancouver Studio

I worked as a games artist at the Vancouver studio.

Skills included:
- Modelling and texturing environments
- Lighting and shading environments

Environment modeller, lighter, level builder

London, UK
Sep 1998 - Oct 2002

Intelligent Games

Intelligent games was a small games company in the UK. We worked in small teams to produce games for children, plus assets for EA Sports.
I worked as junior environment modeler and lighter for FIFA, and then grew to becoming environment lead for World Cup.

Seasoned Presenter and Judge

Presentations include:
GDC China - UFC art direction.
GDC San Francisco - Fight Night Art Direction.
Siggraph - Realtime Live theatre presentations.
Siggraph - Realtime live judge.
Siggraph - Hackathon judge.

Experience pre games

I worked as a contractor in theatre lighting, prop making, set painting and prop sculpture for TV, film and advertising.
Constructing non-digital pieces of work such as
Fibre glass construction of armor for costumes and props
Clay sculpting for costumes and props
Backdrop painting for film and TV
The 'before games' section of my portfolio shows some of this off, but a lot of the photographs of this work have been lost.

Education

BA Hons, in 3D design and theatre

UK
Sep 1990 - May 1994

Nottingham Trent University

Skills Learnt:
- Conceptualizing plays into 3D form.
- Illustration of all aspects of the play including costumes, set design, and lighting design.
- Working with a team of creatives to visualize and create theatre sets, lighting and costumes.
- Costume design and construction, pattern cutting.
- Practical set construction.
- Practical lighting design and direction.

Visual breakdowns per game

Art Director - Fight Night Champion

The main aims of the game were to:
- Build on the base we had created on Fight Night 4 by giving an overall visual upgrade to the game. More polish to the skin, particle FX, more variation in the venues, and greater realism overall.
- A major feature was to make blood, swelling, cuts more realistic and visible as the game progressed. Our 18 rating made this possible, and fun.
- Another part was to get the game to appeal to not only sports fans, but more casual fans that wanted a story in their game. We therefore created a story based part of the game called Champion Mode.
- We wanted Champion Mode to feel like your character was in a Fight Movie. We made decisions to render at 30 fps with motion blur, which gave the game a more filmic feel, plus working on installing an easy to use and robust movie colour grading tool.
- All environments and characters were designed by production, lead artists and me. I art directed all aspects of this mode from giving feedback to concept artists, direction to rigging, animation, environments and also giving feedback to our cinematics team.

Art Director - Fight Night 4

The main challenges from Fight Night 4 were to exceed the visuals on Fight Night 3, whilst completely changing the game mechanics and introducing physics based gameplay.
All characters were re-built to take advantage of a physics based type of game, we used the term 'no punch is ever the same' to drive the visuals. So the look and behaviour of particle FX, muscle flex, jiggle, punches, reactions were based on the type of punch that was given or received.
The focus was all on the boxers in the ring, crowd and environments was secondary.
I art directed all areas of the game.

Art Director - FIFA Street 3

The main aim of this game was to move away from the normal realistic sports look and give a more childlike and fun feel to the game. We wanted to appeal to a younger audience than before.
We achieved this by introducing a hyper-real exaggerated feel to the game; all our famous players were caricatures, all environments played up to the colour palettes and unique elements of their part of the world. Whilst not total fantasy, the aim was for the game to look cartoon-like.
I art directed all aspects of the game