

VFX, Games, Animation & Motion Graphics Careers Guide 2016





Growing up, I would always be green with envy watching the 'making of' content and still can't believe my luck that I'm now actually doing it myself. This keeps me fully motivated and very happy. To be an artist in the industry, you need a showreel. Escape taught me the skills I needed to make that possible. I'm now a Matchmove Artist at Dneg which is an awesome place. John Gresko, 3D Escape Studios graduate (Escapee) Matchmove Supervisor, Double Negative

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The UK; where creative success stories begin

by Dominic Davenport, Vice Principal, Escape Studios



The creative industries are defined as software and games, film and tv, advertising, design and fashion, architecture, publishing, crafts and music, art and culture. There are over 2.6 million people employed in the creative industries in the UK with the largest proportion of people working in London and the South East, accounting for 1.1 million jobs or 44% of the UK's creative workforce.

While working in film, television or the games industry might sound glamorous or even unattainable, these jobs - while highly specialised - are jobs just like any other and are big business. As the demand for work increases within the creative industries, so too does the need for skilled, creative and technically talented individuals.

2016 is shaping up to be another fantastic year right across the UK's most dynamic sector:

- The UK's Creative Industries are now worth a record £84.1 billion per year to the UK economy.
- The UK's Creative Industries grew by 8.9 per cent in 2014 - almost double the UK economy as a whole.
- The UK Government continues to create the right environment for creative industries to thrive, through tax reliefs, inward investment, and safeguarding music and cultural education programmes.
- The UK's Creative Industries generate nearly £9.6million per hour - almost twice the rate of the wider UK economy.
- 2016 is set to be another blockbuster year for UK's music, film, video games, TV and publishing sectors.
- British films, music, video games, crafts and publishing are taking a lead role in driving the UK's economic recovery, according to the latest Government statistics.

Information taken from the Creative Industries Economic Estimates Report – January 2016
From: Department for Culture, Media & Sport. First published: 26 January 2016



The areas of focus for the programmes at Escape Studios are software, games, film and TV. Collectively, these industries account for over £50 billion of GVA and employ 465,000 people in London. It's important you choose a role that fits with your own personal skills and aptitudes; fortunately, Escape Studios has a range of VFX, Games, Motion Graphics and Animation short courses in addition to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, so there's something to suit everyone. Escape Studios courses are classroom based and are designed, developed and delivered by industry professionals. We're experts at crafting 'studio-ready' talent. So when you leave, you're ready to walk into your first role - and being based in London means you'll be right at the heart of the action, the place where creative success stories begin.

Image courtesy of Milk ©ITV



What does it take to break into the VFX, Games or Animation industries?

by Dr. Ian Palmer, Deputy Vice-Principal, Escape Studios



To break into your first job in 2D VFX, you need to demonstrate accurate rotoscoping and rig removal techniques on your showreel. One of the exciting parts about being a compositor is that you're the linchpin that brings all the elements together adding that creative finessing needed to produce the polished final shot, so you'll need to have a creative flare for composition, design, light and colour to balance all the 2D elements you will be working with. Showing keying and compositing photo-realistic CG rendered elements will also get your reel to stand out in the competition. Only show your best work, even if it's just two shots! Less is more is what recruiters at all post houses say to inspiring compositors and you'll need the desire and drive to create the final polished product/imagery to a high standard.

To break into the 3D industry takes real commitment and a lot of hard work. You can start out as a runner for a facility in order to learn on the job; this used to be the only way in before the emergence of training providers. The next best option is to prepare a strong showreel that can illustrate your skills. Industry professionals tend to not only look for good technical work but also seek people with a good eye for colour and composition. After all, in this industry stories are told and emotions are conveyed through the use of stunning imagery.

Animators have been described as "actors with a pencil - or a mouse". Animators bring characters and creatures to life, breathing life into them and making them give a performance - just like actors do. Successful animators must be good technicians, to understand all the digital tools available, but they must also be creative, inventive artists who make characters interesting and fun to watch. Animators must learn the craft of acting as well as the latest techniques of digital wizardry and be able to demonstrate those skills in order to break into the industry.

There are no shortcuts to becoming a great games artist, just lots hard work and dedication to create a portfolio of impressive work. Your game art should show a variety of approaches and styles. If there is a specific games developer you would like to work for make sure you understand what they are about, tailoring your work to the studio style can really help you get that foot in the door.

VFX Careers on the rise

VFX companies desire artists that have the right skills and potential to grow in their careers to create the dynamic imagery directors require. The demand for both 2D and 3D operators has always been high in all areas of VFX such as broadcast, films, and advertising. It is especially prevalent nowadays because of the increased demand of high standards in visual effects for broadcast TV series internationally i.e. Game of Thrones and Dr Who, to name a couple of examples.

Blockbuster VFX films have been growing and the demand for artists has risen internationally. In most feature films there are lots of effects shots; these need a large number of 3D elements to be created and also the need for Compositors to seamlessly integrate the new background and various elements to finish off the shots. New industries are appearing all the time due to new technology. The exploration of Virtual Reality (VR) is adding to that repertoire of skills to acquire for compositing artists and as the technology matures more 3D content will appear. Software developers are currently producing new tools for artists to solve VR's live action challenges.

Image courtesy of Primefocus ©Entertainment Film



The VFX
role for you...

The VFX Pipeline — The process of creating visual effects is long and complex

It all begins in the art department where the concept and storyboard artists design the look and feel of the project, and pre-viz animators begin creating a rough version of VFX shots.

When the concepts are signed off, the designs are handed to the modelling department where they're turned into 3D assets ready for texturing, shading and rigging. Matte painters can then begin the process of creating backgrounds and set extension.

Once principal photography is wrapped, the major work begins in post-production, where digital effects are combined with live action.

This process involves matchmovers, rotoscope artists, animators, lighting and effects technicians and, finally, compositors who bring all of the elements together as seamlessly as possible.



Pre Production

Pre-viz

Map out the entire film in basic CG so anyone working on the film can see the Director's vision

Research and development

Build new software and tools to accomplish the tasks the post-production crew will need

Asset generation

Virtual film props will be modelled, textured and rendered ready for when the filmed sequences come back from set. This includes; Texture, Rigging, Shading, Modelling

Art development

Map out the entire film in basic CG so anyone working on the film can see the Director's vision

Dailies

A daily morning meeting to catch up on what work has been done and what is planned

Post Production

Animation

Anything that moves on film needs to be animated, from cars to creatures, the animators will bring the characters to life

Matchmove

This is the start of the VFX process - the matchmovers take a flat film plate and build a 3D environment

Lighting

Recreating real-world lighting inside a virtual environment

Dailies

A daily morning meeting to catch up on what work has been done and what is planned

Simulation

The team recreate the behaviour of real world phenomena through computer simulations, including; fire, water, explosions, fur and skin

Matte paint

Use photo reference, 2D elements, 3D models or draw with a digital tablet to create impressive virtual landscapes

Rotoscoping

One of the oldest VFX professions; this is the art of isolating one element from a shot to be moved into another

Motion Graphics

Design, build and animate a range of graphics, text and images using a mix of practical and virtual 2D and 3D techniques

Compositing

Collate elements from every other department and combine them to create the final shot

Keen to get into VFX or Animation, but not sure which direction to turn? We've summarised some of the key areas for you:

Interested in getting into 3D VFX?

by Mark Spevick, Head of 3D,
Escape Studios



3D graphic production is a huge umbrella term for many skills within the computer graphics industry; skills are as diverse as painting to writing computer code. There are jobs to cater for everyone; if you're an artist there are careers to be found in texture painting or digital sculpting and modelling. Animation is for people with a sense of timing and character acting. FX artists and TD are for those with more of a technical background where scripting and computer simulation skills are important. 3D is so large and diverse that sometimes people find themselves doing a bit of all the above. It is certainly exciting and challenging and not for the faint of heart!

Mark Spevick, Head of 3D at Escape Studios, has worked on every Gilliam film from 'Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas' to 'The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus', starring the late Heath Ledger. He also worked with director Martin Campbell on 'Zorro' and 'Mask of Zorro' before supervising on the set of 'Casino Royale'. Most recently, Mark managed the CG team that worked on the parachute scene in 'Angels and Demons', whilst working for post-house Double Negative.

Why get into 2D VFX?

by Davi Stein, Head of 2D,
Escape Studios



The 2D/Compositing artists are in the last department a shot must go through in the VFX pipeline before being finalised by the VFX Supervisor and Director. Since all the elements necessary for the shot culminate here, it is the artist's responsibility to make the shot look totally believable! You'll need an artist's keen trained eye for photo realistic details so that you always create exceptional imagery. The excitement and gratification of producing the end result is an exhilarating position and creative career to grow into.

Davi has an impressive range of compositing experience and works with us as a compositing tutor. Davi was Senior Compositor on 'The Dark Knight', 'Where The Wild Things Are', 'The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader' and 'Australia'. She also composited the Davy Jones character for 'Pirates of the Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest' and the Hall of Prophecies sequence for 'Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix'. Last but not least, Davi was also part of the incredible teams that worked on 'The Matrix Reloaded' and 'The Matrix Revolutions'.

Image courtesy of Pixomondo © HBO

Runner...

The runner is a great place to start in VFX, and enables you to gain experience of working in a studio environment and familiarity with the VFX pipeline. It is an entry level role, which is there to provide support for the artists, animators and technicians. You'll be called upon to maintain studio equipment, clean communal areas, re-supply materials, prep for meetings, work on reception, perform office admin and meet and greet guests. But you might also get the chance to show off your skills on a live project when the opportunity arises, and who knows where that might lead? There are many veteran VFX artists that started out as runners. Many VFX companies offer mentoring programs for runners to learn and practice the skills needed to jump to the next level.

Skills and qualifications needed

- An interest and understanding of VFX
- Computer literate
- Good people skills
- Passionate about VFX
- Organised, self-motivated
- Maths and English qualifications are useful

Career progression in role

If you have the right attitude and aptitude, you might get the chance to step up to an entry level artist role in the company or become a production coordinator. Once you've made that first step, it's up to you how high you want to go...

Salary guide

Salary: £15,000 per annum

Next steps to getting there

The easiest way to become a runner is to apply for jobs. As long as you fulfil the requirements, you stand a chance of starting your career in VFX. Submitting a showreel is a great way to get on top of the competition.



I'm enjoying every step of the journey towards my dream job and in five years' time, I hope to be working as an artist at Double Negative in compositing, rotoscope, prep work...the opportunities are endless! That's the advice I'd give to anyone thinking about a career in VFX, go for it and enjoy it, because getting to where you want to be is really fun!
Caterina Goncalves, Runner, Double Negative



We hire casual runners all the time, it's a perfect way of getting into the VFX industry. You can also speak to studios about work experience. Work on your showreel, hone your skills and keep up to date with industry trends.

Anna Swift Crewing and Talent Development Manager, Framestore (Film VFX)



Producer

Like a movie producer, the VFX producer is a project manager, tasked with bringing the show in on schedule and to an agreed cost, ensuring the vendor delivers on time but also makes a profit. At the initial bidding stage, the producer will discuss the client's needs to make sure the VFX are achievable within the time and budget, and check that the live-action crew shoots the right kind of footage for the effects team to work with. Once production begins the producer sends progress reports back to the client, dealing with bottlenecks and any issues that may affect delivery.



Part of what I love about my job is maintaining a good relationship with the client and the VFX team, whilst figuring out how to achieve the visual effects on budget and on time.
Hasraf 'Haz' Dulull, Freelance VFX Producer/Supervisor

Skills and qualifications needed

- Time and people management skills
- Organised and meticulous
- An understanding of the VFX pipeline
- Experience with project management tools such as FileMaker Pro, Project, Excel and Shotgun an artistic or creative degree isn't necessary for this role, and it may be that you get into production via a junior role in the company, such as a runner or production assistant.
- A business degree or project management qualification is useful

Salary guide

Salary: £20,000-£40,000 per annum
Upper Salary: £52,000-£78,000 per annum

Next steps to getting there

The best way into this role is by getting project management experience and having a passion for VFX. Otherwise, starting as a runner is as good a place as any. Escape Studios also offers a short course in Producing for VFX to fast-track your career into the industry.

Career progression in role

Starting from a junior role, such as a runner, you can move up to production coordinator and then on to become a producer. This is a fairly senior role in the VFX studio, so once you're there you're pretty much at the top of the tree.



3D Artist...

The term '3D artist' is a generic title that usually applies to people who can model and texture, and perhaps have experience of rigging, lighting and animation. A 3D artist may be called upon to build anything from set extensions to complex spaceships, to detailed character sculpts that need to be painted and rigged ready for animation.

Skills and qualifications needed

An art-related degree is always valuable, whether that's in fine art, illustration, computer animation, graphic design or film. Attending Escape Studio's courses in 3D is a great way to position yourself above the next applicant. However, studios will be looking at your specific abilities as a 3D artist, and so it's essential that you have a showreel, or at least a portfolio of your work.

- An art-related degree is preferable
- Experience of 3D modelling, texturing, lighting, etc.
- Autodesk Maya and Autodesk 3ds Max preferred
- An eye for detail and realism
- Meticulous and methodical

Career progression in role

Depending which area you specialise in, you can go on to become a senior 3D artist, or head of a department, such as modelling, texture or layout. Then, as your experience and skillset grows, it's possible to rise through the ranks to become a VFX supervisor, leading the the entire project (or at least a big chunk of it) from conception to completion.

Salary guide

Salary: £17,000-£40,000 per annum
Senior Artists: £52,000-£78,000 per annum
Supervisors and Specialists: £78,000-£104,000 per annum

Next steps to getting there

The best place to start with CG is to begin modelling, painting and animating.



Being a member of the team that won an Oscar and BAFTA for the visual effects in *Interstellar* is something I am very proud of and I feel truly privileged to have been part of that project [and] working on *Spectre* was a dream come true for me. Without studying at Escape, I wouldn't have just started working on my 6th 'A' list film.

John Gresko (Escapee), Matchmove Supervisor, Double Negative

Digital Compositor



I am required to not only work on shots requiring visual effects but also to take charge of an edit and oversee the project from start to finish. By this I mean managing a live edit for a commercial or music video and taking charge of distributing the shots to other artists for relevant work to be done. I would then collect all completed shots and insert them back into the edit thereby building up the commercial towards a finished piece. I deal directly with clients regularly, discussing and dealing with their requirements. I am learning more software in order to fulfil the needs of a lead compositor in the current industry. Software such as Nuke, Flame, Nuke Studio and FTrack.
Taran Spear (Escapee), Nuke Artist, Electric Theatre Collective

Compositing is the action of layering all the various elements in a shot – live action, mattes, multiple CG passes, 3D lighting, animation, particle effects – and blending them all seamlessly to create the photo-realistic final shot. Working throughout the production process, you'll need to collaborate with other VFX departments to creatively and technically problem solve along the way.



You need to be both artistic and technical for VFX. You'll redefine the word 'real' by creating the impossible and making people believe in magic.

Victor Perez (Escapee), Film Director and VFX Supervisor

Skills and qualifications needed

VFX companies will be looking at your specific abilities as a compositing artist. Showcasing the following talents helps to get that coveted interview:

- A keen eye for lighting, colour and composition
- Experience with NUKE or Adobe After Effects
- Meticulous and methodical
- An understanding of the VFX pipeline
- Good attention to detail for when you review your own or other artists work
- Demonstrate social skills for dealing with clients and other artists
- Strong work ethic and determination to ensure project deadlines are met
- A good creative streak and imagination for when you need to meet a tricky brief; you may be required to come up with different creative outcomes for a particular shot
- A degree course in art, photography or filmmaking is a great place to learn the fundamentals of composition, lighting and colour; Escape Studios' intensely vocational courses in compositing will also take your skills a long way towards getting that job placement
- An art-related or VFX degree is preferable

Career progression in role

Compositors often start out as rotoscope artists or in junior roles, but can rise to become mid-level, then senior compositors and compositing supervisors. From here the path is open to becoming a VFX supervisor.

Salary guide

Salary: £17,000-£40,000 per annum
Senior Artists: £52,000-£78,000 per annum
Supervisors and Specialists: £78,000-£104,000 per annum.

Next steps to getting there

It's vital to showcase your compositing skills in your reel, which needs to include rotoscoping and rig removal techniques using live action footage combined with CG, plus colour grading and other effects to produce a suitably cinematic result. Escape Studios compositing programmes will help you to develop and refine that killer showreel.

Research and Development Engineer



The main role of an R&D engineer is the development of tools used in the VFX pipeline. This can involve anything from creating new applications and plug-ins to writing the code that binds all the pipeline elements together, to wrangling problems during production. You'll also be called on to document new tools, train users and work with artists to deploy, bug-fix and evolve the software.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Must possess advanced coding skills
- Good understanding of mathematics
- Organised and meticulous
- An understanding of the VFX pipeline
- Familiar with popular 3D apps and renderers
- A degree in computer science or engineering is essential - you'll need a degree or higher in computer sciences, computer engineering, mathematics or a related field, and have experience of various technologies such as C++, Python, Java, Linux, SQL and so on

Salary guide

Salary: £18,000-£30,000
Upper Salary: £78,000-£140,000 per

Next steps to getting there

Obviously this is a role for someone extremely technically minded, who can program at a fairly high level. You'll need to exhibit your coding skills and show the depth of your knowledge. You may need a few years' experience with a smaller studio before being accepted at one of the bigger VFX vendors.

Career progression in role

You can work your way up to become a senior R&D engineer or team leader, and eventually run the entire R&D technology department. Some experienced engineers also make the move over to become CG or VFX supervisors



There is a particularly poor awareness among students interested in maths and sciences of the potential application of their skills to VFX; yet these are the students who hold the most potential for us in technical positions.

Courtney Vanderslice-Law, Production Director at Cinesite

Technical Director

The TD's role can vary from studio to studio, but usually requires a combination of the artistic and the technical, applying engineering skills to creative problems, such as designing a new rigging system, programming shaders or building simulations. Some studios will have a number of TDs responsible for specific areas like character rigging, lighting, pipeline management, effects and so on.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Experience with 3D apps and the VFX pipeline
- An aptitude for scripting and/or programming in C++ or Python
- Conversant in the more technical aspects of VFX including fluids, particle dynamics, geometry generation, rendering algorithms and so on
- A degree in art, computer science or computer engineering is useful - this depends on the kind of TD role you're looking to gain: a degree in art or computer science is useful, but a killer showreel will always win the day

Salary guide

Salary: £18,000-£46,000 per annum
Upper Salary: £78,000-£140,000 per annum

Next steps to getting there

Naturally, courses in computer science or scripting will be beneficial, but again it comes down to your showreel. This can either demonstrate your breadth of knowledge across a variety of clips, or focus in on a specific discipline, such as lighting or simulations.

Career progression in role

TDs can specialise in one area, such as effects, shading, creatures or rigging, or become a generalist TD, depending on their skills and interests. There are various ranks within the TD role, eventually leading to CG supervisor and ultimately VFX supervisor.



Since graduating from Escape Studios, I have managed to secure some major jobs for Framstore, MPC London and ILM Singapore (Lucasfilm) as an FX Technical Director and currently I'm working at Sony Pictures Imageworks in Vancouver.

Duarte Victorino (Escapee), FX Technical Director, Sony Pictures Imageworks

Matte Painter

The matte painter's key role is in the creation of digital environments and set extensions, which integrate into live action shots. Someone with the necessary skills may also be called upon to provide concept art to help visualise the project at the outset.

Skills and qualifications needed

First and foremost you need to be an artist, with a grasp of the fundamentals of art: light, colour, shadow, form, perspective and atmosphere.

- Must possess good artistic skills
- Knowledge of Photoshop or digital painting is useful
- Experience with other apps such as NUKE and Silhouette
- An eye for realism and detail
- An art-related or VFX degree is preferable - a degree helps to show you have the ability and the discipline to apply yourself.

Career progression in role

A job as a matte painter can lead anywhere: obviously there are senior roles in the matte painting department and a matte painter might one day move into the role of Art Director at the highest echelons.

Salary guide

Salary: £17,000-£40,000 per annum
Senior Artists: £52,000-£78,000 per annum
Supervisors and Specialists: £78,000-£104,000 per annum

Next steps to getting there

A portfolio of realistic paintings or a showreel illustrating your skills is a great way to get your foot in the door. If you're still rough around the edges think about an art degree course, or take a compositing course at Escape Studios to help fill in the gaps in your CG knowledge.



I feel fortunate to have my hobby as my job - I love to work with Photoshop! I find great satisfaction looking between the start and finished piece. It's amazing to work alongside so many great artists. Laura Macfadyen (Escapee), Digital Matte Painter, Framestore



The Motion Graphics role for you...

Why get into Motion Graphics?

*JM Blay, Head of Motion Graphics
Escape Studios*



Motion Graphics is a term surrounded by controversy, nobody agrees on a definition but it serves to encapsulate under a name, a bunch of creators who use 2D, 3D, live action, animation, stop-motion and different techniques to create imaginative images in motion.

We live surrounded by motion graphics. Walking on the street, watching television, in our mobile and tablet, playing a video game, watching a movie, even taking the tube, screens all around us contain videos full of graphics where we can not avoid watching images in motion pumping in to our eyes.

The industry is demanding more and more motion designers, people who can create those animations. From film production companies to advertising or marketing agencies as well as small creative studios, digital agencies or start ups, are demanding more and more that specific profile. Do you want to be the next one?

JM Blay, Head of Motion Graphics at Escape Studios, is an independent director and motion designer with more than fifteen years in the industry. He's worked for films like The Hobbit and Guardians of the Galaxy, for video games like Call of Duty Black Ops II, for TV channels like the BBC and for music videos for artists like Paul McCartney and Lily Allen. He's also worked for clients such as NBC Universal, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros, Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Marvel, BBC, Sony, Nikon, Panasonic, Lenovo, Adidas, Adobe, Citi Bank and Activision among others. He has a PhD on Design in the speciality of Motion Graphics.

Motion Graphics Artist



Motion graphics is a craft that allows you to work across a range of creative industries, such as graphic design, advertising, animation, broadcasting, multimedia, games or film. It's generally regarded as combining a variety of 2D and 3D elements, as well as live action to create dynamic, colourful visuals, infographics, special sequences for films, video game animations, film titles and promos among others. The motion graphics artist's remit is somewhat broad, so one of their key strengths is ingenuity and imagination.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Familiarity with Maxon Cinema 4D and Adobe After Effects is useful
- An eye for movement, timing and colour
- Strong creativity or/and design background
- Originality and imagination
- A degree in art or graphic design is preferable - a degree is a solid foundation; Check out Escape Studios' Motion Graphics evening course, too.

Salary guide

Salary: £17,000-£40,000 per annum
Senior Artists: £52,000-£78,000 per annum
Supervisors and Specialists: £78,000-£104,000 per annum.

Next steps to getting there

Motion Graphics is all about your showreel; you'll need to display technique and diversity, and make your work look unique. No pressure!

Career progression in role

You can work in a variety of companies, from film production companies to advertising or marketing agencies as well as for small creative studios or start ups. In the film industry, you can work doing film titles, UI design, special sequences or VFX. You can be an in-house motion designer or a freelancer; the motion graphics industry is growing rapidly and studios will always be on the lookout for talented motion graphics artists.



I am currently working on motion graphics and UI design for various innovative brands in a very talented post-production team at creative agency Across The Pond, who are also the in-house video agency for Google. It was great to have a showreel by the end of the course, the compilation of my new abilities was certainly a contributing factor to gaining interest from potential employers. Teresa Tang (Escapee), Motion/Brand/UI Designer, Across the Pond

The animation role for you...

What does the role of an Animator involve?

*by Alex Williams, Head of Animation,
Escape Studios*



Animation is one of the fastest-growing parts of the entertainment industry, having gone from a small cottage industry just a few short decades ago to a multi-billion dollar industry with creative centres all over the globe. The UK has some of the best animation studios in the world, including Aardman Animation (of Wallace and Gromit fame), Blue Zoo, and companies like Framestore which compete globally to produce some of the finest character and creature animation in the world. There has never been a better time to enter the animation industry, and bring your own characters to life.

Alex Williams is a cartoonist and animator whose film credits include *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *The Lion King*, *The Iron Giant*, the three latest *Harry Potter* films, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. He has worked for many Studios including Disney, DreamWorks, Fox, Warner Bros, and Sony. Alex is the founder of the online animation school, animationapprentice.org. He also draws the weekly cartoon strip *Queen's Counsel* which appears on Thursdays in *The Times*.

Animator

Although you might be called upon to animate a spaceship landing or an aerial dogfight, for the most part, animators in the VFX industry are responsible for breathing life into CG characters. It's a demanding, specialist role and one of the toughest aspects of CG to master. The position requires the animator to follow a script, perhaps even lip-synching to dialogue, and imbuing a virtual character with genuine personality.



Skills and qualifications needed

Few people step straight into an animating job: many take one of three entry routes - Runner, Matchmove or Junior Animator directly and work their way up, or move across from hand-drawn 2D animation.

- Experience of 2D or 3D animation techniques
- 3D modelling or rigging is useful
- Life drawing or acting skills
- A feel for character, movement and timing
- An art-related or animation degree is preferable - a degree helps to show you have the ability and the discipline to apply yourself.

Career progression in role

Some animators progress to senior animator positions and then become head of an animation department. Others progress to Animation Supervisor and then potentially Animation Director or even overall Director if they were to move on to animated features, but the good news is that talented animators are always in demand.

Salary guide

Salary: £17,000-£40,000 per annum
Senior Artists: £52,000-£78,000 per annum

Next steps to getting there

The best place to start with CG is to begin modelling, painting and animating.



Doing the animation course helped fast track my Maya skillset to allow me to apply for a greater variation of jobs. I now regularly work in both 2D and 3D allowing me to be more versatile. It's a highly competitive industry so you need to be the best you can. You could argue that it depends on what area of animation you want to get into, but generally speaking you will need to be a mix of artist and tech geek. The balance of which is different for everyone.

Richard Jeffery (Escapee), Animation Director, FluxMedia

The Game Pipeline

Pre Initial concept/ pitch & game design...

Pre Production, a small team Proof of concept

Production
Game design
Code/tools

Art department

Rigging
Animation
Technical
UI/UX

Production, large team

Audio
Games design
Code/tools
Marketing analytics
QA

Art department

Enviroment building World Creation
Assets/prop creation
Lighting
Texturing/materials
Concept art
FX
Characters
Rigging
Animation
Technical
UI/UX



Publish

Why should you get into Games?

by Simon Fenton, Head of Games, Escape Studios



The games industry is one of the most creative, diverse and exciting industries for a digital artist to work in today. As a games artist you could be creating stunning worlds, characters or props in styles ranging from the realistic to cartoony or anywhere in-between. One of the greatest things about being a games artist is that you never stop learning and are always looking at the latest techniques and tools which means the job never gets boring. Fortunately it's almost impossible not to improve on a daily basis as you will be working alongside some very skilled people across all the discipline of games, from designers, animators and programmers to name just a few. There is nothing quite like the thrill of creating some artwork and then seeing it in the game and playable.

Simon is Head of Games at Escape Studios and has worked as a professional artist for 13 years, producing 3D graphics in many forms, from models and environments to effects and animation. After graduating from a Fine Art background, Simon joined Sony Computer Entertainment's London studio, and worked in senior and lead roles on nine published titles including Total NBA '97, This is Football, Getaway, Black Monday, Kinetic, Kinetic Combat and Sony Playstation Home.

The Games industry... business is booming

The UK video games development sector has grown to record levels; TIGA, the network for game developers and digital publishers, have written an annual report into the state and health of the UK video games industry which shows that between December 2013 and December 2014:

- the number of creative staff in studios surged by almost 10 per cent from 9,896 to 10,869 full-time and full-time equivalent staff (a record);
- the number of jobs indirectly supported by studios rose from 18,093 to 19,872 (a record); combined direct and indirect tax revenues generated by the sector for the Treasury increased from £419 million to £460million (a record);
- annual investment by studios rose from £458 million to £503 million (a record);
- the game development sector's contribution to UK Gross Domestic Product increased from £1,016m to £1,115m (over £1.1billion - another record).

© Information taken from TIGA (June 2015)

Needless to say, the UK is a strong supporter of the games industry, so the games sector is likely to see some exciting opportunities emerging in the years to come!

Animator (Games)



I'm currently Art Director and Narrative Designer on an unannounced First Person Puzzle Adventure game. I helped craft the world in which the game takes place both narratively and visually. We are a very small team working on the game so we all help out with different parts and put forward ideas. My main day to day is keeping up with what my artists are up to, giving feedback on concepts and models and then writing lots of content for the game. It keeps me very busy and has been very stressful, but it's also a chance to make something based on things I really love.

Holly Pickering (Escapee), Art Director, A Brave Plan Ltd

They create the 2D and 3D visible elements of a game to portray different movements and behaviour to determine how characters, creatures and objects should move in order to bring them to life, so that the animation looks good from every possible angle. The turnaround time is much faster for Animators working on a game as they don't have as much time as an Animator would have working on a film, so it's vital that Games Animators have a solid understanding of body mechanics, what animations work best for the player and how to move a story forward.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Proficient with setting up and maintaining animation rigs
- You'll need to be creative and imaginative
- High levels of technical competency in Maya required
- Be proficient in the use of art software applications such as Photoshop, Maya, Blender, Houdini, 3ds Max or Zbrush
- Demonstrate experience of animation pipelines within a game development production
- Understanding of body mechanics and an eye for movement
- Experience of working with in-house tools and console development process
- Motion Capture Experience
- Have knowledge of traditional and computer 2D and 3D animation techniques
- You'll need to demonstrate your work through a portfolio and/or showreel
- You will usually need to have completed an animation-related degree, including games animation

Career progression in role

There are various ranks within Games Animation, typically starting at a Junior Animator (Games) level, before progressing on to be an Animator (Games), eventually leading to Senior/Lead Animator (Games) and ultimately Animator Manager (Games).

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £20k, Experienced: £24k - £32k, Senior: £34k - £38k, Lead: £40k - £48k

Next steps to getting there

Having an interest and passion for animation is highly recommended. Those studying Art, Graphic Design or something similar at GCSE/A-level or equivalent should look into Higher Education courses or Undergraduate degrees in or related to Animation. Gaining experience during studies is also recommended, so developing a showreel and/or portfolio of work during studies is also encouraged.

3D Modeller & Texture Artist (Games) / Games Artist



3D Modeller & Texture Artists in the Games industry work from a piece of concept art to build three-dimensional computer models of everything (art assets) that is needed for a game and then create textures, colour and 3D effects for environments, creatures, characters, and objects. They use a variety of platforms, software and game engines for their work. Some companies separate the modelling and texturing job roles.

Skills and qualifications needed

- An eye for movement
- 3D modelling skills
- Weight, timing, staging, characterisation
- Creativity
- Communication skills
- Time management & teamwork
- Proficiency with Photoshop as well as node based shader creation tools such as Maya or Unreal
- A grasp of modeling, animation, UV mapping and rendering
- Experience with Unreal, Unity or other game engines
- A high-quality (quality over quantity) showreel is essential
- Most Artists in the games industry possess a degree centered in game development or HND in an art subject, such as fine art, graphic design or illustration.

Career progression in role

Most people start in a junior role and often decide on whether to specialise in 2D or 3D work. You could progress to be a team leader and ultimately a Senior Artist or a Lead Artist.

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £20k, Experienced: £24k - £32k, Senior: £34k - £38k, Lead: £40k - £45k

Next steps to getting there

A strong interest and passion for Gaming and art is required for those looking to have a career as a Games Artist. Those studying Art, Graphic Design or something similar at GCSE/A-level or equivalent should look into Higher Education courses or Undergraduate degrees in or related to Art or Fine Art. Gaining experience during studies is also recommended, so developing a showreel and/or portfolio of work during studies is also encouraged. As a specialist role, you will need to have at least 2-3 years experience as an Artist before your specialism. To secure a position as a Texture Artist, a degree in VFX or Games Art is strongly recommended, to secure full training in specialist software, techniques and skills required in the industry.



I'm a few months into my dream job at SEGA Hardlight, if I could go back in time to tell my childhood self about the games we make here and the team I work with, he'd be almost as blown away as I am now! My time at Escape not only equipped me with the skills I needed to hit the ground running in the games industry, but boosted my confidence in myself as a professional enough to knock on some big doors too. Matt Allan (Escapee), Senior Artist, SEGA Hardlight



Technical Artist (Games)

Technical Artists bridge the gap between art and code, maintaining the art-production workflow and overseeing how in-game artwork is integrated into the project to the highest tech standard. They are responsible for all issues related to the technical implementation and management of in-house and outsourced assets, so they often set up production systems and provide advice to offer technical solutions to aesthetic problems.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Experience with Unreal, Unity or other game engines
- An understanding of graphics content optimization and Maya
- An artistic eye for detail and excellent problem solving skills across artistic and technical disciplines
- Expertise with 3DS Max (or similar 3D package)
- Proven experience with scripting languages – MAXScript; Python
- Understanding of art/animation game pipelines and rigging/skinning
- Good communication and people management and mentoring skills
- Strong technical art skills demonstrated in a portfolio or demo reel
- You will generally need a degree in game art, game design or a technical subject

Career progression in role

If you demonstrate potential in the role of technical artist, you may have the opportunity to advance to a lead technical artist position and eventually work your way up to technical art director.

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £24k, Experienced: £24k - £35k, Senior: £35k - £45k, Lead: £48k - £55k

Next steps to getting there

To progress to the role of a Technical Artist, you must have a strong passion and interest in the technical aspects of Games Art across various hardware, software and programming systems. Technical Artists often have a similar route into the industry as Games Artists - with a degree or higher qualification in Fine Art, Graphic Design, Illustration or another art-related subject. Experience gained throughout studies is also highly encouraged, with a showreel and/or portfolio of proven knowledge and skills recommended.



Whenever people ask about my job they're always interested to know I work in video games, and usually confused when I say I'm a Technical Artist. It's not an obvious role, but it is an increasingly vital one. Being a Technical Artist means working as part of the art team - allowing them to work in the most intuitive way possible, to preserve their artistic vision while maintaining the technical restrictions set by the games programmers. So not only is it cross disciplinary work, but there is a huge variety in the tasks I get to work on. It's a role that means continually learning new skills and processes, in both art and technical fields. Most Technical Artists come from either a 3D art or programming background before finding themselves sliding into that area between disciplines. I started out as an Environment Artist working on my first video game project. Naturally having some technical skill meant I was given a lot of the technical tasks. Months of experience and learning later, at the start of our second project I had already joined the Technical Art team! I'm still learning, and still enjoying learning. Ross Garfoot (Escapee), Technical Artist, Playground Games

Visual Effects Artist (Games) / FX Artist



The Visual Effects Artist (Games) will participate in design meetings and is responsible for helping develop, implement and maintain a vision that can define the look of a FX game. The FX Artist is responsible for in-game and pre-rendered VFX and creates natural and spectacular effects all working in real-time.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Strong Photoshop editing skills for creating texture effects
- Knowledge of Unity or Unreal Engine
- Experience developing particle systems and geometry based visual effects in real time
- Excellent communication and organisation skills
- Good working knowledge of Maya
- Good understanding of in-house tools and software used in development
- Practical and methodical approach to both technical and creative problem-solving
- Excellent artistic ability
- Demonstrate dependability and commitment to projects/tasks
- Flexible approach with the ability to adapt with change
- Ability to work under pressure and to strict deadlines
- Good demonstration of skills through showreel
- You will generally need a degree in game art or game design or have completed an intensive game art production course
- An eye for the timing and animation, creating motion of real world or fantasy objects and visual FX
- Abilities in areas such as modeling, skinning, animation or lighting.

Career progression in role

Visual Effects Artists in the games industry tend to move up to a lead role in FX or cross over to animation.

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £24k, Experienced: £24k - £35k, Senior: £35k - £45k, Lead: £48k - £55k

Next steps to getting there

As an FX Artist, you must have a strong passion and interest in the technical aspects of Games Art and Visual Effects. With a similar route into the industry as Games Artists- with a degree or higher qualification in Fine Art, Graphic Design, Illustration or another art-related subject is required, however Visual Effects training in software such as Unity, is strongly recommended for this role, with a showreel and/or portfolio of proven knowledge and skills to show employers a necessity.



I'm currently a VFX artist at Splash Damage, I've been here just over a year and worked on the Gears of War: Ultimate Edition which was a fantastic project with some really talented people. As a games FX artist I'm responsible for all the best parts of making art for a video game - fire, water, explosions, buildings falling down! It can get pretty technical at times but nothing beats that feeling of something you've made come to life on the screen.

Tom Harle (Escapee), VFX Games Artist, Splash Damage

Concept Artist

The Concept Artist works alongside the internal development team across all projects. They are responsible for creating outstanding character concepts, environment concepts and prop concepts. that help guide the tone, as defined by the Concept Principle and Art Director. They are responsible for the production of concept illustration, marketing assets, development support and pitch materials and are able to effectively express ideas quickly to the right level of finish for the brief.



Skills and qualifications needed

- Experience creating concept artwork
- An exceptional understanding of human/ creature anatomy and strong traditional art skills with the ability to communicate dynamic character poses and expressions
- A strong portfolio demonstrating a wide variety of skills in character, environment and prop design
- Experience in storyboarding
- A good understanding of graphic design and logo development
- An excellent core artist foundation covering lighting, value, colour, form, perspective and composition
- Comfortable working in a variety of art styles
- Extensive knowledge of Photoshop and/or similar industry standard 2D software
- Good understanding of 3D packages to support traditional skills such as Maya or ZBrush



This industry is all about passion and persistence. My job is to create a certain mood in the game world, draw the player's attention to something and basically tell a story through light. Ognyan Zahariev (Escapee), Lead Lighting/FX Artist, Ubisoft

Career progression in role

Once you have extensive professional production experience, the natural progression from this role is to develop into a Senior Concept Artist and ultimately a Lead Concept Artist.

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £20k, Experienced: £24k - £32k, Senior: £34k - £38k, Lead: £40k - £45k

Next steps to getting there

A qualification and proven drawing skills in Fine Art, Graphic Art or Games Art are required for a role as a Concept Artist. Other related subjects such as Animation, Illustration and Graphic Design are also suitable, but a portfolio and/or showreel of experience and proven skills is necessary for employers.

GUI Artist/ UX Artist

The GUI (graphic user interface - pronounced gooey) Artist is responsible for the look, feel and success of games. They create all GUI assets to design the aesthetic and functional user interfaces for games, as well as assisting the marketing department with banners/ advertising assets. GUI Artists tend to possess strong technical and pipeline skills and use their artistic experience to support the whole team. The GUI Artists works closely with the UX Designer to create aesthetic and efficient interaction elements and devise graphic proposals that are in line with the game art direction. Studios often have different job descriptions and duties for GUI Artists; UI Artist, UX Designer, Visual Designer are roles that are often blended together at smaller studios.



Try to be self-critical and only place your best work in your portfolio. Quality always beats quantity! Don't lose sight of your dreams and stay driven even during setbacks. Work hard and you'll get there!

Ognyan Zahariev (Escapee), Lead Light/FX Artist, Ubisoft



Skills and qualifications needed

- Expertise with Adobe Flash and also ideally knowledge of Scaleform
- Knowledge of working in engines such as Nebula, Unreal Engine or Cry Engine
- Experience from working with game production processes
- Very good knowledge of Photoshop and Illustrator
- Passion for casual games and mobile interfaces
- Good sense of / functional and visually attractive interface design
- Completed a degree or intensive course in design, game art, digital media or similar

Career progression in role

The next steps for most GUI Artists are senior level, manager, and then director. User experience offers a strong career path if you can get a foot in the door and move up through the ranks.

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £20k, Experienced: £24k - £32k, Senior: £34k - £38k, Lead: £40k - £45k

Next steps to getting there

Much like a Conceptual Artist, strong experience and/or a qualification skill in Fine or Games Art is necessary as a UI Artist. Skills training in Gaming Software such as Unity and Photoshop is also required. Although other related subjects such as Graphic Design are beneficial, a Games Art-specific course and/or training is recommended.

Environment Artist (Games)



Environment Artists are responsible for the creation of immersive environments that realise a game's vision. Environment Artists work in conjunction with the Art Director to ensure that they consistently create high quality environment art, benchmarking and raising the bar for environment content for future titles. Environment Artists tend to be flexible, highly motivated and detail conscious professionals; they communicate with level designers and animators on a regular basis to take into account gameplay considerations. They also retain hands-on creative responsibilities and keep up to date with the latest bleeding-edge art production techniques.

Skills and qualifications needed

- Comprehensive experience of using Maya, Zbrush and Photoshop
- Experience of scene composition, organic texturing, organic modelling and terrain sculpting
- Strong understanding of the use of real world reference
- A strong portfolio demonstrating understanding of lighting and shader techniques
- Practical and methodical approach to both technical and creative problem-solving
- Ability to work under pressure and to strict deadlines
- A strong showreel demonstrating excellent artistic abilities and environment experience

Career progression in role

Environment Artists often advance to a Senior Environment Artist or Lead Artist position or transition to a position within game design.

Salary guide

Entry-Level: £18k - £20k, Experienced: £24k - £32k, Senior: £34k - £38k, Lead: £40k - £45k

Next steps to getting there

As a specialist role, if you are to become an Environmental Artist, you will need at a qualification and/or proven drawing skills in Fine Art, Graphic Art or Games Art. Other related subjects such as Animation, Illustration and Graphic Design are also suitable, but a portfolio and/or showreel of experience and proven skills is necessary for employers. You will also need to have considerable experience as a 3D or FX Artist within a Games Development company.



I'm currently working as an environment artist on Fable Legends. Part of what I love about my job is creating a living, breathing world in real time. Players can move around it and interact with it in any way they choose. And every day I get to work with amazing talented, inspiring people.

Dan Whitehouse (Escapee), Environment Artist, Lionhead Studios

The Next Steps...

Getting hired – and how we help

Completing an Escape Studios short course or degree in VFX, Games, Animation or Motion Graphics one thing, but getting hired is another. We'll make sure you're equipped with the right skills and materials to kick-start your career. Here's how our courses will help you to land that dream job:

- We partner with industry to ensure what we teach is what studios are looking for
- You'll be taught by industry experienced tutors...our tutors don't just love VFX, Games, Animation and Motion Graphics, they LIVE FOR IT!
- Our courses will get you job-ready on completion of the course
- On our courses you'll get to make beautiful visual experiences, learn a craft and work in teams to deliver viable projects: all essential skills to be a success
- Our network of mentors, professionals and employers will provide feedback on your work to help you develop an outstanding portfolio



You need to really want this career and be willing to work hard to achieve it. When applying for work, you must apply everywhere; target both big and small studios.

Taran Spear (Escapee) NUKE artist, Electric Theatre Collective



You'll be up against some stiff competition, so here are some key things we recommend when you're applying for jobs...

1

Research the company and the role you're applying for. Become familiar with the studio's work, structure and pipeline, and tailor your application accordingly.

2

Decide on the kind of work you want to focus on: are you going to specialise in one field or try and become a generalist?

3

Craft a professional-looking CV and covering letter. Include all your relevant qualifications and experience, but keep it short and to the point. Make it look good, but don't over-design.

4

Make your showreel as sharp as possible. Only include the good stuff, and put your best work at the start. Include breakdowns and highlight your work if you were part of a team – don't take credit for others' efforts.

5

Don't forget to work on your 'soft skills': things like teamwork, interpersonal communication, friendliness, empathy and enthusiasm for the subject matter. It's no good being a VFX, Games or Animation genius, if no-one wants to work with you!



Make sure you have an awesome portfolio. It's the first thing a studio will look at. Focus on a discipline and become brilliant at it. Dan Whitehouse (Escapee), Environment Artist, Lionhead Studios

Want to craft a killer showreel? Here's our list of the do's and dont's...

Do

- Keep it relevant to the position you're applying for
- Play to your strengths
- Lead with your best shot: impress from the outset
- Show a range of skills but focus on those that will get you that specific role
- Use only your best work
- Breakdown and annotate your work
- Show finished shots in the first half and breakdowns in the second half
- Keep it fresh and original
- Show your workings
- Keep it short and simple, start and end with an impressive shot
- Think about composition and presentation
- Practice and develop all of your art skills
- Use reference material

Don't

- Attempt overly complex or ambitious work
- Use or copy other people's work
- Show any work in progress
- Include sub-standard work just to pad it out
- Use offensive material
- Make it too long – it won't all get seen



Image courtesy of E+E Publicity Stills ©



Image courtesy of LLM @Disney

Escape Studios Courses

Short Courses

- Video Games Art Production (12 weeks – Full-time)
- Video Games Art & Effects Production (18 weeks – Full-time)
- 3D for Visual Effects (12 weeks – Full-time)
- 3D for Visual Effects (18 weeks – Full-time)
- Compositing for Visual Effects (12 weeks – Full-time)
- Compositing for Visual Effects (18 weeks – Full-time)
- Animation (12 weeks - Full-time)
- VFX On-Set Supervision: A Practical & Theoretical Approach (6 Days – Part-time)
- 3D Foundation (30 weeks - Part-time, Evening)
- Compositing for Visual Effects (20 weeks - Part-time, Evening)
- Motion Graphics (12 weeks - Part-time)
- NEW** Motion Graphics (3 weeks - Full-time)
- NEW** 360 VR - From Shoot to Headset (1 week - Full-time)
- NEW** Camera Tracking (1 week - Full-time)
- NEW** Camera Tracking (5 weeks – Part-time, Evening)
- NEW** 3D Intermediate (30 weeks – Part-time, Evening)
- NEW** Introduction to Houdini (1 week - Full-time)
- NEW** Introduction to Houdini (5 weeks – Part-time, Evening)
- NEW** Houdini - Dynamics (1 week - Full-time)
- NEW** Houdini - Dynamics (5 weeks – Part-time, Evening)
- NEW** Houdini - Tools and Pipelines (1 week - Full-time)
- NEW** Houdini - Tools and Pipelines (5 weeks – Part-time, Evening)
- NEW** Storyboarding (8 weeks – Part-time, Evening)

Undergraduate Courses

- BA/MArt The Art of Video Games (Integrated Masters)
- BA/MArt The Art of Visual Effects (Integrated Masters)
- BA/MArt The Art of Computer Animation (Integrated Masters)

Postgraduate Courses

- MA Visual Effects Production (3D)
- MA Visual Effects Production (Compositing)
- MA Game Art
- 3D for Visual Effects Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)
- Compositing for Visual Effects Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)

Taster courses

Want to take VFX, Games or Animation for a test drive? Book a taster day with us. We deliver tasters based at our studio in London, so you can see if the courses are really for you. Tasters are available for our short courses and undergraduate degree programmes.

- Compositing for Visual Effects Taster (1 day)
- 3D for Visual Effects Taster (1 day)
- Games Art (1 day)
- Undergraduate Tasters in VFX, Games and Animation (1 day)

Escape to the career of your dreams...

Our 4000+ alumni (dubbed 'Escapees') are spread far and wide enjoying careers at the best studios. They've worked on everything from 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens', The latest Bond film 'Spectre', 'The Martian', 'Guardians of the Galaxy' and 'Dr. Who' to the latest awe-inspiring commercials, games and music videos. We're really proud of our Escapees, check out some of their most notable achievements!

John Gresko, Matchmove Supervisor,
Double Negative
Most recent filmography:
Spectre (Matchmove Artist)
Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
(Matchmove Artist)
Terminator Genisys (Matchmove Artist)
Exodus: Gods and Kings (Matchmove Artist)
Interstellar (Matchmover: Double Negative)

Carlos Conceicao, Digital Compositor
at Industrial Light & Magic
Most recent filmography:
Star Wars: The Force Awakens (Digital
Compositor: ILM)
Spectre (Digital Compositor: ILM)
The Martian (Digital Compositor: ILM)
Ant-Man (Digital Compositor: ILM)
Avengers: Age of Ultron (digital compositor: ILM)

Adam Dewhirst, Senior 3D Artist, The Mill
Most recent filmography:
47 Ronin (modeler/texture artist: The Mill)
Guardians of the Galaxy (modeler)
World War Z (modeller: Cinesite)
Doctor Who (TV Series) (modeler/texture
artist)
The Dark Knight (digital artist: Framestore)
The Golden Compass (modeller: Framestore)

Dan Whitehouse, Environment Artist,
Lionhead Studios
Fable Legends (Lionhead Studios)
Sniper Elite 3 (Rebellion)
Zombie Army Trilogy (Rebellion)
Kinect Sports: The Rivals (Rare Studios)

Ross Garfoot, Senior Technical Artist
at Playground Games - Playground Games
Forza Horizon 2 (Playground Games)
Forza Horizon 2 Presents Fast & Furious
edition (Playground Games)

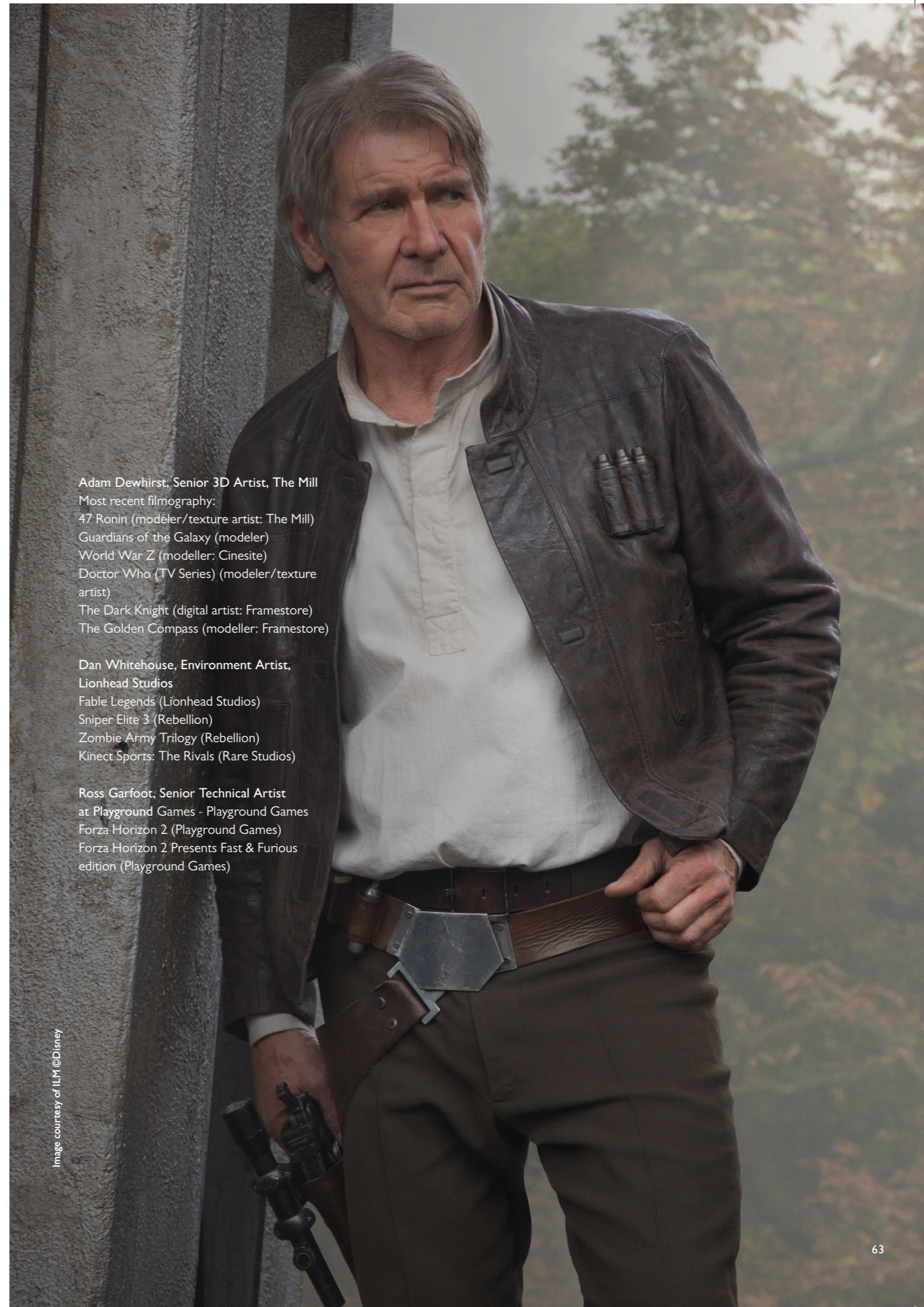


Image courtesy of ILM ©Disney



Image courtesy of Bluebolt ©HBO

Get started

Escape Studios is based in London, close to Soho, where most of the UK's major studios are situated. The academy was founded in 2002 with a singular vision - to solve the industry's lack of educated 'studio-ready' talent. Since then, we've graduated over 4,000 Escapees, now working in VFX, Games and Animation around the globe.

Escape alumni work in every facet of the VFX, Games and Animation industries working on:

- VFX Oscar and BAFTA winning films, including Interstellar, Gravity and Life of Pi
- 100s of award winning films, games and television shows
- 1,000s of award winning commercials

As a student of VFX, Games, Animation and Motion Graphics, it's important to learn real-world production techniques used by professional artists right now. The industry evolves incredibly quickly, so you've got to keep up with the pace. Here at Escape Studios, we make sure you're learning the most relevant skills for industry and are ready to hit the ground running.

Like no other festival on earth

One of the biggest events in the calendar – every year we bring you The VFX, Games and Animation Festival. The Festival is known through-out the industry as a celebration of the creative industries and a showcase of talent.

From industry panels discussions covering everything from recruitment to best studio practice, to exclusive behind-the-screen screenings from Hollywood blockbusters, we've been lucky enough to have some of the biggest names in the industry take part:

- Paul Franklin from Double Negative (DNeg) discussing his Academy Award winning work on *Interstellar*
- Pixomondo talking about their incredible work on HBO's *Game of Thrones*
- Kyle McCulloch from Framestore gave us an exclusive insight into animating the characters for Marvel's box-office smash *Guardians of the Galaxy*
- State of Play talked about the innovative and award-winning game *Lumino City*

By studying with us, you'll be at the heart of the Festival. Many of our students help out behind the scenes, and our successful Escapees are often key speakers showcasing their latest blockbusters. There's no better place to rub shoulders with the best of the industry, be inspired by award winning work and get a glimpse into the inner workings of some of the world's most successful creative giants.

Our next Festival is set to be bigger and better than ever! Visit thevfxfestival.com to find out what's in store!

V
THE FESTIVAL
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23-25 February, 2016



Image courtesy of Cinesite ©



Be brave - I was terrified when I started at Escape, but it was a great place to be; relaxed, fun, but also focused on the industry and on gaining employment.

Leo Neelands, Escapee, VFX Supervisor, LipSync Post

Your next step

We hope this guide has given you a better idea of the jobs that are available in VFX, Games, Animation and Motion Graphics. If we've inspired you, why not discover more about Escape Studios at:
pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/escape

Undergraduate Course Queries

info@pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk
0203 441 1301

Postgraduate Course Queries

admissions@escapestudios.com
0207 348 1920

Short Course Queries

admissions@escapestudios.com
0207 348 1920

Come and see us

Confused which path to take?
Come along to an Open Day at Escape Studios and we'll help you decide:
Book your place at:
pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/opendays

Where to find us

Escape Studios
Shepherds West
Rockley Road
London W14 0DA

Shepherds Bush has good transport links to the rest of London, including a rail station and London Underground station, served by the Central and Hammersmith and City lines. Shepherds Bush has great transport links to the rest of London, including a rail station (Shepherd's Bush National Rail station) and London Underground stations, served by the Central line (Shepherd's Bush underground station) and the Circle or Hammersmith and City lines (Shepherd's Bush Market underground station).