

Artists are not Game Designers (usually)

Game Designers craft gameplay experience.

Artists present that experience to the world and allow the world to interact with it.

The three pillars of videogame creation are:

- Design
- Engineering
- Art

The fourth pillar that makes it all come together:

- Production

When all of these are working together in harmony that is when magic happens.

Art Careers in the Video Game Industry

- Art Director
- Concept Artist
- Modeler/Texture Artist
- Technical Artist/ Technical Animator
- Animator
- Visual Effects Artist
- User Interface Artist (Motion Graphics Artist)
- *Sound Designer*
- *Writer*

Art Director

- Own, articulate, and evangelize visual direction of a project.
- Direct multiple art disciplines to achieve incredible results.
- Lead, inspire, and mentor artists and art leads.
- Approve concept paintings, models, textures, and other benchmark assets to set the standards for others.
- Work closely with game design to ensure art supports a gameplay-first player experience.
- Foster and maintain effective relationships with other disciplines (production, engineering, design).

Concept Artist

Concept artists create visual images of ideas.

- Create visual targets to help other artists achieve the desired result.
- Help the AD set the style of the game and help maintain consistency across work being done by multiple artists.
- Solve visual problems before substantial time is spent by other disciplines.

- Most commonly they work in Photoshop and traditional media, though increasingly they use 3d programs to block out a scene and then paint over it.

Modeler/Texture Artist

Modelers build, sculpt, and paint every 3 dimensional object seen in the game.

Modeling is broken into two major areas:

- Organic modeling (people, creatures, vegetation, terrain, soft fluffy things)
- Hard surface modeling (buildings, vehicles, metal objects, anything hard)

Modeling is typically done in programs such as 3dsMax, Modo, Maya, Zbrush, and Mudbox. Texture work is usually done in Photoshop with additional programs such as nDo, dDo, Substance Painter, and Mari seeing increasing use.

Some studios use separate texture artists whose only job is to paint the models.

Technical Artist/ Technical Animator

Tech Artists are the gateway between Artists and Engineers

- Proficient in Math, Physics, and Art.
- Design tool extensions or discover new techniques to make our work more efficient (through scripting or actual programming).
- Solve problems within the game that straddle the line between art and engineering (such as material properties, lighting, integrating assets into the game, optimizing content while maintaining aesthetic, etc).

Technical Animators create the skeletons/rigs upon which all creature motion is based and integrate the rig into the model so that an animator can make it move.

Animator

Animators are responsible for all motion and performance within the game.

- Actors responsible for conveying style, action, and emotion through their work.
- Utilize both keyframe and motion capture animation.
- Create storyboards and shoot their own video reference.
- Control camera usage and direct cinematic scenes.
- Tools such as Maya and 3dsMax.

Visual Effects Artist

Visual Effects Artists create all special effects within the game.

- Effects appear different every time they happen and add life to the game world (fire, smoke, explosions, falling debris, water, bugs, birds, rodents).
- Create traditional special effect (glows, lasers, distortion effects, blast waves, etc).
- Often using a particle engine (a mathematic simulation tool that allows you to assign properties such as motion, material, life span, radiance, etc to a series of points within the game).
- VFX artists are also Technical Artists who understand math, physics, and art and are very aware of the technical limitations of the game engine.

User Interface Artist

User Interface Artists present the game directly to the player and are responsible for making sure the player can quickly and easily understand the game.

- Create the basic information overlays over the primary game view (HUD)
- Create all menus and dialog screens (graphic design).
- More than any other artist they must put themselves in the place of the player and revise the game to make that experience as smooth and intuitive as possible (UX).
- Tools such as Photoshop, Scaleform, Flash, AfterEffects, etc.

They may also be responsible for motion graphics within the game. This is 2d animation of menus and information within the game world, though this may also be a separate field or may overlap with animation.