ARI VELAZQUEZ

Game Developer in Melbourne, Australia

ari.v@me.com
(+61) 421 803 885
https://arivelazquez.com/

EXPERIENCE

▶ Blankhans

Technical Designer, Senior Game Designer

August 2021 – Current
Global Remote

A PC studio formed to create an online multiplayer survival game called **Coreborn**. I worked first as a technical designer to create our prototype and then mainly as a systems and content game designer once we received funding and moved into production. We shipped on Steam Early Access on July 18, 2023.

Responsibilities

- **Prototyped a fully functional 4-player survival game** prototype in Unreal Engine with EOS backend.
- **Created a structured GDD wiki** from disparate documents and whiteboards.
- **Designed the majority of survival systems** such as gathering, building, crafting, skills, inventory, player and enemy stats, combat, and more.
- **Directed user interface development** working closely with the team's UI/UX designer.
- **Implemented in-engine tools** to help with tedious tasks, such as a crafting recipe importer that took the output of a spreadsheet and automatically generated assets and auto-tuned relevant systems.
- **Operated as de-facto lead designer**, working across multiple disciplines to maintain vision and scope while also training and supervising junior designers.

Shipped

- **Coreborn: Nations of the Ultracore** – Steam Early Access

▶ Independent Development

January 2020 – July 2021

Worked on a variety of game projects in my free time to better my experience with Unreal Engine and Unity3D as well as hone my own design skills. Each project had an intentionally small scope and focused on specific aspects of design and technical skill to learn. Only one made it to a shipped state before new work picked up.

Shipped

- **Astronomia (PC/Mac):** A spatial 3D puzzle game with a minimalist classic arcade art style developed entirely solo over five months in Unreal Engine 4. Focused on Unreal Engine basics such as blueprints and materials, and also learned about application deployment and store page management on Steam and itchi.io platforms.

▶ Maxis, Electronic Arts

Technical Game Designer

November 2017 – October 2018
Redwood City, CA, USA

A historied PC/Console studio within Electronic Arts mostly known for Sim City and The Sims. I worked as a technical designer on **The Sims 4** and shipped two Expansion Packs (**EP05 "Seasons"** and **EP06 "Get Famous"**) focusing on implementation of features into the game via custom toolset.

Responsibilities

- **Implementation and iteration** of features in our in-house made tools such as Object Editor and Sage.
- **Regular communication across disciplines** to keep parties up-to-date on implementation progress and new or changed expectations.
- **Tracking down and fixing bugs** from across all of the game's Expansion, Game, and Stuff packs, based both on internal prioritization and community feedback.

Shipped

- Expansion Pack 05 – **"Seasons"**
- Expansion Pack 06 – **"Get Famous"**

▶ Magnet Hill Games
Co-Founder, Lead Designer

November 2015 – March 2017
San Francisco, CA, USA

An indie studio founded in 2015 that lasted for a year and a half. We worked on a few game projects and met with many publishers and platform holders, but ultimately were not able to secure enough funding to continue. I was the designer and producer for each project and also managed the studio needs like hiring and biz-dev.

Responsibilities
- **Documentation and organization** of design docs, audio needs, story codices, etc, in GDrive and Trello.
- **Design and iteration** of game systems and mechanics with regular feedback from stakeholders.
- **In-engine level editing** of building blocks for procedurally generated levels in Unity.
- **Task and milestone planning** for each of our projects and adjusting schedules and sprints to adapt to new developments or problems in Trello.

Highlighted Projects
- **Fourside (working title, shelved):** I designed and lead development on a story-driven rogue-like prototype about planet hopping through space to kill monsters and gather resources to build out your home outpost.
- **Blacksmith VR (working title, shelved):** I led design and created a pitch deck for a virtual reality game about being a blacksmith with Cooking Mama-like mini-games. I also created a budget plan, paired with a teammate's prototype, and shopped it to publishers for funding.
- **Grand Miracle (shelved):** I led design and created a pitch deck for a virtual reality game about solving environmental puzzles in a ringworld that floats around your head. I also created a budget plan and presented to Google's Daydream VR team, who had originally asked us to pitch them.

▶ Waystone Games, Electronic Arts
Game Designer

November 2014 – March 2015
Redwood City, CA, USA

A mobile game studio, previously PC, trying to figure out what we were going to work on in the wake of Dawngate's closure. I transitioned into a design role.

Responsibilities
- **Documentation** of various pre-production design and planning in Confluence.
- **In-engine tuning and scripting** for procedurally generated levels in Unity.
- **Rapid iterative prototyping** on new ideas and possible directions in Unity and browser-based HTML/JS.

Highlighted Project
- **Project Zeri (working title):** I focused on player progression via item economy (with a browser-based abstracted prototype) and procedural level tuning for a mobile monster battling game. I was also the self-appointed Documentation Warden, making sure our wiki was properly organized on a weekly basis.

▶ Waystone Games, Electronic Arts
Web Engineer

January – November 2014
Redwood City, CA, USA

A PC studio within Electronic Arts working on a live-service story-driven MOBA called **Dawngate**. EA ultimately shut down the game due to a shift away from free-to-play PC games.

Highlighted Projects
- **Dawngate client homepage:** I created an Akamai-hosted Javascript/jQuery homepage for the game software upon logging in. The client wrapped an embedded WebKit browser, allowing us to update homepage content without requiring a client patch. The homepage was able to communicate with various player systems to display data about games played, as well as list news articles and incorporate a system that notified players when the community team or team-sponsored players were streaming on Twitch.
- **Dawngate Chronicles:** I stood up a Wordpress instance with many plugins and manual modifications on AWS to host our game's webcomic. The producer who used the backend was able to upload a new comic, appropriately tag it by season and episode, and schedule it in the future with ease.

EDUCATION

▶ Georgia Institute of Technology
B.S. in Computational Media

August 2005 – May 2010
Atlanta, GA, USA