Mike Hines

Creative, Technical and Managerial Leader

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I am a highly motivated and experienced creative, technical, and managerial lead with over 25 years of entertainment industry experience building games and virtual reality experiences. I have shipped 12 titles, run development and live product teams, built inclusive and high performing teams from the ground up, and built full applications independently. My superpowers are creative problem solving, teamwork, breadth of knowledge, holistic development approach, clarity of vision and technical requirements, clear communication, and calm, focused leadership.

I have experience ranging from small agile startup teams to large international teams, working on products including both game and non-game experiences using multiple game engines and building for pc, console, web, and mobile ar/vr. I am highly organized, and I love facilitating, leading, ensuring quality standards, and empowering the creation of amazing teams and experiences, and am deeply committed to my teams and projects.

Portfolio: https://luminousmachine.com/portfolio
Linkedin Profile: https://www.linkedin.com/in/michaelhines/

Skills

Creative: Art Direction, Creative Direction, Concept Art, 3D Environment Art, 3D Character Art, User Experience Design

Technical: Technical Art Direction, Pipeline Development, Prototyping, Mobile VR Optimization, Shader Development, Unity C#, Unreal Engine Blueprints

Team: Inclusive Culture Building, Team Management, Workflows and Production, Vision and Goal Alignment, Coaching and Mentoring, Outsource Management, Project Management

Software: Unity3d, Unreal Engine, Maya, 3ds Max, Blender, Zbrush, Substance Painter, Photoshop, Illustrator, Figma, Premiere, After Effects, Visual Studio, VSCode, Github, Git, Perforce, Plastic (UVC), Notion, Jira, Trello

Work History

Low Drag Labs - Burien, WA (08/2024 - Present)
Co-Founder
Minimo - https://store.steampowered.com/app/3107290/Minimo/ - 100k+ wishlists
Viz Dev and Art style development
Product and project planning
Execution in every area of development collaborating with Owner/Founder
Managing outsourcers for tech art and asset development
Developed fully playable multiplayer game
Playtesting actively with 12k+ user Discord in Pre-Alpha

Sparklight Studios - Burien, WA (05/2012 - Present)
Owner
Fully contract app development for WebGL and Mobile VR (solo)
Build project plans to meet client needs within budgets and timeframes
Developed client relationships, proposals, and pitches
All content creation and code development
Projects include: Unannounced VR Theatre project, AI mentor project (Taara Quest), VRChat experience for the band Yaima, Jimi Hendrix AR/VR Experience, Side scroller game for the band Frankie & the Witch Fingers

Revere XR - Burien, WA (02/2023 - Present)
Technical Art Director
Product design following unique, community focused company vision
Full development of Unity based mobile virtual reality experiences
Content creation, including environment, characters, vfx
Animation integration and tree
Technical planning, project planning
Pitch development, presentation, and product demonstrations

InpathXR - Burien, WA (05/2023 - 03/2024)
Partner and Chief Creative Owner
Executive leadership and company building
Owned the creative aspects of development
Owned multiple areas of business operations, including finance and product strategy
Company culture development with a balance of human first and entrepreneurial spirit
Process and project structure development
Onboarding and coaching
Virtual experience design, content creation, and development

Maloka - Burien, WA (02/2023 - 06/2023)
Creative Director
Feature design for Maloka live product
Creative design iteration planning
Feature implementation in Unity (collaborative)
Stakeholder and executive leadership requirement gathering
Aggregating and integration of customer insights
Project of Galaxy Labs

Meta - Seattle, WA (08/2018 - 11/2022)
Art Lead and Technical Art Lead
Multiple roles including contract technical artist, technical art lead and art lead
Optimization, tools, and pipeline development for Rift Home
Worked extensively with outsource teams to maintain quality and consistency
Tech Art Lead and Art Lead on Horizon Worlds for similar periods of time (1.5 years)
Modeled development strategies, including creating workflow guides for team
Championed an empathetic and inclusive culture
Set up in-product virtual meetings to drive product interest on team
Key contributor on innovation in player-facing creation tools in Horizon Worlds
Development, creation, and live operation of core public spaces for Horizon Worlds
Drove process improvements to optimize cross-discipline feature development
Prototyping and creative visioning
World scripting and experience implementation

Harebrained Schemes - Kirkland, WA (01/2016 - 07/2018)
Technical Art Director and Art Manager
Technical art direction on BATTLETECH product (including VFX)
Art Manager for most of art team on BATTLETECH product (all but UI)
Quality control and feedback for Tech Art and Env Art team deliveries
Designed and built environment art tools pipeline (Unity C#)
Built in-game destruction system (Unity C#)
Collaborative product development with cross-discipline leadership team

Goblinworks - Redmond, WA (09/2012 - 12/2015)
Art Director
Art direction on Pathfinder Online
Art team creative direction, management, and production
Handled all art outsource relationships and feedback directly (Art and Audio)
Art ownership for Kickstarter design, media creation, and execution
Collaborative product development with company leadership, design, and engineering

Co-developed player economy and content pipeline for live service with design director
Live operation (open beta) feature development and implementation
All terrain, VFX, and UI content creation, allowing me to lead by example

Academy of Interactive Entertainment - Seattle, WA (01/2012 - 12/2013)
Adjunct Instructor
Teaching overall game development course
Created course materials and taught classes
Led students in prototype game development
Evaluated and graded students

TRC Family Entertainment - Msida, Malta (10/2011 - 05/2012)
Art Director
Team building, staffing, and management for the art team
Managed budgets and resource allocation for art team
Visual direction development, including pitching to executive leadership
Generated concept art and mood boards as visual communication of goals
Technical planning and product roadmap development
Developed performance tracking system as part of full Scrum implementation
Creative feedback for art team

Epic Games China/Titan Studios - Seattle, WA (06/2008 - 01/2011)
Project Director
Worked in Seattle at Titan Studios, which was owned by EGC
Project direction on Atlas Technology (MMO tools & back end for UE3)
Core Tech dev & support on MARS (last name ZMR) & Dreamworld (unreleased MMO)
Coordinated developers between Shanghai and Seattle studios
Product design and tools feature design utilizing MMO experience
Developing demos and prototypes of Atlas technology
Pitching and demonstrating to potential clients at trade shows & direct

Darkstar Industries - Louisville, CO (09/2007 - 06/2008)
Technical Art Director
Technical art direction on Fat Princess (PSN)
Direct implementation technical art and art asset creation
Overall collaborative product development with engineering, art, and design leads
Extensive game testing and iteration as small, agile team
Pitch material development for multiple creative projects prior to Fat Princess

Perpetual Entertainment - San Francisco, CA (08/2003 - 08/2007)
Art Director

Art direction on Gods & Heroes: Rome Rising
Built internal art team (around 40 artists at peak)
Set up and managed all outsourcing for first half of the project (hired Art Manager)
Worked with multiple international outsource studios (70+ outsourcers at peak)
Developed full art guides combining visual and written communication of targets
Hired and managed full art lead team to delegate responsibilities
Managed budgets and compensation plans for most of project
Developed marketing materials and coordinated with publisher marketing team

VR-1/Jaleco Entertainment - Boulder, CO (11/2001 - 07/2003)
Lead Artist
Art leadership on Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde (PS2, Gamecube)
Visual effects for Goblin Commander
Hired and managed art team for Goblin Commander
Art and technical art plans for multiple projects (Lost Continents revamp, others)
Pitch and prototype development

Cyan Worlds - Mead, WA (06/1999 - 07/2001)
Lead Artist
World team leadership for Teledahn world
Technical art lead on RealMyst (original - PC)
Provided direction, feedback and support to world team
Environment art concepting and 3d environment art
Lighting, VFX, scripting, and sequence triggering
Optimization and product release finalization

Headspin - Chapel Hill, NC (10/1997 - 06/1999)
3D Artist
Graphics feature development in collaboration with engineering
Visual effects and lighting development
Key role in demo creation that resulted in company acquisition
Environment art and world scripting

Education

Bachelor of Fine Arts - Murray State University - Murray KY (08/1991 - 12/1995)
Received degree, Bachelor of Fine Arts, area of specialization in Drawing
Graduated Cum Laude and received Special Recognition Award from Fine Arts Department