

MARCUS MONTGOMERY

Oakland, CA · 650-704-0561 · marcusmontgomery@yahoo.com
www.linkedin.com/in/marcusingames · www.sleepy-genius.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR & GAME DESIGN DIRECTOR

Veteran game design leader with deep expertise building player centered experiences by building trusted cross-functional collaboration among essential partners. Adept at reducing the gap between project vision and team execution with a calm and positive attitude while delivering clear, actionable feedback, direction, and guided mentorship. Ensures strong results from concept to release through player research, structured playtests, and developing strong design methodology frameworks.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Creative Direction | Game Design Leadership | Strategic Feedback & Clear Communication | Cross-Functional Collaboration
Product Strategy | User-Centered Design (UX) | Mentorship | Prototyping | Process Optimization & Knowledge Sharing
Pitch Development | External Partner Collaboration | Problem Solving & Adaptability | Culture Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Xbox Game Studios Publishing, Oakland, CA

January 2022 – July 2025

Design Director

Multiple Unreleased Projects (PC and Xbox platforms)

Provided expert design guidance for multiple unreleased PC and Xbox projects, fostering strong partnerships, internally championing partner visions, and shared subject-matter expertise in player controls. Delivered targeted feedback to drive gameplay improvements and player engagement, while also actively pursuing personal and team development.

- Directed creative alignment across partner studios and internal stakeholders, delivering targeted milestone feedback, annotated gameplay improvement videos, and combat tuning samples providing clarity and actionable insight.
- Built trust and fostered collaboration with external partners, earning a place in their creative design meetings and accelerating project momentum.
- Championed the partners' product vision among internal Microsoft stakeholders, fostering cross-organizational support and confidence in their projects.
- Collaborated with production teams to track development milestones and deliver strategic feedback aligned with the game's core pillars, enhancing overall product appeal and player engagement over subsequent UR playtest scores.
- Partnered with User Research to design playtesting plans that clarified feature perception and guided adjustments to boost player engagement.

Meta, Menlo Park, CA

September 2018 - January 2022

Product Manager

Oculus Home (PC-Oculus Rift); Scoreboards, Oculus Move, Meta Quest Home Environments (Meta Quest 1 and 2)

Developed product requirement documentation and defined success metrics, driving project refinements that elevated user engagement and enhanced the quality of the VR OS experience.

- Crafted and championed the product strategy for the System Apps and Platform Art team, while shepherding feature development for Oculus Move, Scoreboards, and multiple home environments — balancing creative vision with cross-functional privacy, legal, and technical constraints.
- Led design and implementation of key Oculus Home features, including Gateways, UGC Homes, and new user experience redesign that resulted in a 110% increase in UGC Home creation and leading to a 3% increase in DAU and a 7% in Multiplayer DAU.
- Managed the Japan Environment pivot due to identified cultural missteps in concept art, quickly implementing cultural quality control processes that resulted in the Ryokan Retreat becoming the number one selected environment in the Japanese region.
- Oversaw the production and release of the licensed IP Myst environment and coordinated its launch entitlement with game purchase, with its promotion increasing gross payments by 6.8%.

nWay, San Francisco, CA

February 2018 - September 2018

Senior Gameplay Designer

Power Rangers: Legacy Wars (iOS, Android)

Led creation, implementation, and balance of new and existing warriors in a live, competitive mobile fighting game.

- Orchestrated collaboration with engineering, animation, and VFX teams to deliver polished, high-impact gameplay across 19 fighters in a compressed timeline, including the Street Fighter crossover content which increased monthly installs by 60%.
- Incorporated community feedback and analytics to refine balance and expand fighter combat diversity, improving player engagement and trust.

Limbic Software, San Francisco, CA

July 2016 - November 2017

Lead Game Designer

Zombie Gunship Survival (iOS, Android)

Led design efforts by coordinating the design staff, guiding the engineering team, and overseeing gameplay systems balance while acting as the creative liaison with our publishing partner in Germany, fostering a strong and collaborative relationship.

- Maintained and balanced Zombie Gunship Survival's unique three-faction combat system, tuning 30+ weapons and enemy scaling.
- Designed gacha box drop tables and collaborated with engineering to streamline data integration and improve rarity drop rate consistency and predictability.

Glu Mobile, San Francisco, CA

May 2015 - April 2016

Lead Game Designer

Unannounced 3rd Person Shooter (iOS, Android)

Spearheaded the development of enemy AI, player weapons, and user-generated level creation.

- Designed 3 distinct enemy factions and replayable mission structures with varied mission objectives and opposition, alongside prototyping the weapon combat systems and enemy AI necessary to support user-generated level creation.

Kixeye, San Francisco, CA

November 2012 - May 2015

Lead Game Designer

TOME: Immortal Arena (Web Browser, Steam)

Spearheaded systems and live-ops design initiatives that improved player retention, optimized matchmaking fairness, and enhanced team workflow efficiency.

- Managed and overhauled 5-person design team's workflows to provide predictability of hero release in live-ops.
- Designed and implemented the tutorial and Quests system which increased D7 by 15% and 27% respectively.

Backbone Entertainment, Emeryville, CA

August 2006 - October 2012

Senior Designer

Dance Central 3 (X360, Kinect); **Wolf of the Battlefield: Commando 3**, **1942: Joint Strike**, **Ugly Americans:**

Apocalypsegeddon (XBLA, PSN); **Gauntlet** (DS: Unreleased)

Led the design team, collaborated with other leads, and drove concept development on many projects. Developed improvements for studio processes, best practices, and team building.

- Oversaw the development of new minigames for Dance Central 3, while managing 2 designers in the creation of new minigames for Dance Central 3.
- Lead and managed a team of 5 designers for two Capcom IP reboots, Wolf of the Battlefield: Commando 3 and 1942: Joint Strike, releasing both under a tight 9-month development cycle.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Sony Computer Entertainment, Foster City, CA

May 2001 – May 2006

Senior Designer

Jet Li: Rise to Honor (PS2); **Unreleased 3rd Person Action Game** (PSP)

Designed and balanced combat systems, levels, and encounters, collaborating with art, programming, and production to deliver polished, engaging gameplay. Authored core design documentation and coordinated cross-discipline and designer efforts, ensuring consistent implementation of player attacks, enemy AI, and fight mechanics.

The 3DO Company, Redwood City, CA

March 1998 - February 2001

Level Layout Director

Army Men: Air Attack 2, **Army Men: Air Attack**, **Uprising X** (PlayStation)

Designed and balanced core gameplay systems, enemies, and player abilities for multiple console titles. Collaborated with cross-functional teams to turn creative concepts into polished, playable experiences from concept through final implementation.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts (BA) – Computer Science

Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, IA

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

- Gameheads Advisory Committee Member and Instructor since 2014, guiding aspiring game developers from underrepresented communities.
- Instructor at the GDC Game Design Workshop since 2018, providing expert training in foundational game design methodologies.