

# kennethfinlayson

## SUMMARY

- 14+ years working in games, film, TV and toys; 8+ years in leadership roles
- Houdini user since 2012, Houdini engine user since 2016 (unity v1, and v2)
- Passionate about tools design, user experience, workflow and systems creation
- Experience making RPG, FPS, multiplayer, co-op and sports titles in various game engines
- Well-versed in character customization, digital acting, garment construction, asset performance and optimization
- Experience growing and maturing young teams as well as leading mature teams
- Very experienced shader author with knowledge of PBR and linear workflows
- Communicates effectively with technical and artistic specialists and bridges gaps in understanding
- Ability to learn and adopt new technologies quickly
- Scripting experience with Python, PySide/Qt, Maxscript, HLSL, Keras, MEL, VEX, Hscript

## SOFTWARE PROFICIENCY

3DS Max	Advanced	Houdini	Intermediate	Photoshop	Expert	NukeX	Intermediate
Maya	Intermediate	Mari	Advanced	Syntheyes	Intermediate	Topogun	Intermediate
ZBrush	Expert	After Effects	Expert	Unreal 3 & 4	Intermediate	Bodypaint	Expert
Marvelous Designer	Advanced	Substance Designer	Advanced	Substance Painter	Advanced	Modo	Expert
						Unity 3D	Intermediate

## WORK

### Hinterland Studio (Vancouver Island, BC)

#### Lead Technical Artist and Character Lead

Jan 2017 – Present

#### Character Lead

Apr 2015 – Jan 2017

#### The Long Dark [Wintermute released 2017]

Apr 2015 – Present

On a small team you wear many hats, and end up touching all corners of the game and its systems. Some of those areas have included; Art direction, Look development, Character and UI process, shaders, tools, optimization.

- Built a suite of tools allowing a team of 2 character artists to produce 100's of clothing assets and UI elements over a 6 month period.

### Sabbatical (Edmonton, AB)

#### Independent Learning

May 2014 – Apr 2015

As my remote contract with Insomniac came to a close, I saw a gift of time and a great opportunity to expand my skills in Houdini, scripting and technical art.

During my sabbatical, I have spent the majority of my time thinking about new approaches to asset

creation and developing artist-friendly tools that turn “dumb” assets (or assets that are entirely dependent on destructive artist workflows) into “smart” assets (or assets that are contextually aware and non-destructive). I am currently learning Qt to enable me to build more elaborate tool interfaces. For my latest work, please visit my [R&D tools blog](#).

## Insomniac Games (Burbank, CA & Edmonton, AB )

**Principal Character Artist – Remote**

Feb 2014 – Apr 2014

**Lead Character Artist – Studio**

Mar 2011 – Jan 2014

- Within the first year reduced the run-time cost of all character related assets by one-third or greater while increasing the visual quality coming out of the department
- Pioneered, documented and revised an asset pipeline around Marvelous Designer and cloth, putting dynamic clothing on hundreds of assets
- Delivered company-wide presentations regarding asset performance and creation during the transition from one game engine to another
- Responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining several key asset creation, randomization and end user customization systems
- Hired, managed and groomed a young but talented team of 5 character artists
- Instilled a culture of artistic as well as technical pride in artists
- Introduced Houdini to the studio and a vision for future production, hired experts, which would culminate into us making a major contribution to the **Houdini Engine** initiative
- Key author of shaders at the studio

**Sunset Overdrive** [released 2014]

Mar 2011 – Apr 2014

- Highly involved in rendering R&D as well as the guidance of our proprietary engine and the evaluation of Middleware.
- Architected and drove a garment system to put dynamic clothing on 6 body types, 2 genders
- Created systems to generate rendered looks on an abstraction layer independent of assets
- Played a key role in bringing Houdini into the studio and revolutionized world creation

**Fuse** [released 2013]

Mar 2011 – May 2013

- Built many master shaders used globally on the project
- Massive visual and asset quality improvements over Resistance 3
- Massive run-time cost reduction, looks better than R3, costs 60% of R3 assets

**Resistance 3** [released 2011]

Mar 2011 – Sept 2011

- Repaired the relationship between Character art and Tech animation
- Balanced my involvement across 3 “other” SKUs at this same time
- Analyzed current shortcomings in tools to be implemented in the new engine

## BioWare ULC (Edmonton, AB)

**Lead Character Artist**

Jan 2010 – Mar 2011

**Senior Character Artist**

Oct 2007 – Dec 2009

**Character Artist**

Feb 2006 – Oct 2007

**Mass Effect 3** [released 2012] *Metacritic rating: 93*

Mar 2010 – Mar 2011

- Managed an experienced team of 4 character artists
- Balanced the production of 3 SKUs (ME3, and 2x ME2 DLC's) and outsource
- Pioneered the in-house development of: multiplayer assets, a “Gore” system, a modular weapon upgrade system
- Acted as a technical consultant to EA motion capture and scanning facility
- Headed up “in-house delivery” of final shot of ME3 “Digic” announce trailer

**Mass Effect 2** [released 2010] *Metacritic rating: 96*

May 2009 – Mar 2011

**160+ awards, 25+ Game of the Year awards**

- Pioneered the in-house development of Xbox Live assets
- Created multiple party member characters – Illusive Man, Zaeed, Alt Thane etc
- Created key downloadable characters (DLC) (i.e. Zaeed, Katsumi, Shadow Broker, Fire Walker, Overlord, Arrival, Multiple “Skin packs”)
- Developed several armor variants for the female Commander Shepard

**Dragon Age** [released 2009] *Metacritic rating: 86* Jun 2006 – Apr 2009

- Initiated the creation of several tools to facilitate production bottlenecks
- Created the universal head asset as well as head morphs for party members
- Responsible for all weapon appearances and implementation
- Co-managed character creation and customization systems
  - Managed a team of 3 character artists
  - Liaised with graphic programmers, technical animation leads and senior management
- Provided feedback, direction and technical support to contractors
- Trained personnel
  - Authored 20+ page, comprehensive document on level art techniques in ZBrush
  - Created documentation to share and standardize process throughout the organization

**Mass Effect** [released 2007] *Metacritic rating: 91* Feb 2006 – May 2006

- Created clothing variations and one creature

### Electronic Arts Canada (Vancouver, BC)

**Character modeler/Z-Brush specialist** Jul 2005 – Jan 2006

- Provided support to four game teams and special projects
  - Painted master head texture-templates
  - Established visual targets for multiple game teams
- Provided expertise on ZBrush
  - Was a recognized instructor of intermediate/advanced ZBrush classes for EA University
  - Initiated the development of a ZBrush User Group

### Mr. X Inc. (Toronto, ON)

**Junior Visual Effects 3D Animator** 2004

- Responsible for the 3D side of effects shots i.e lighting, tracking, etc.
- Rigged props and pre-visualized shots
- Setup initial shot composites

## FILMS, TV & TOYS

<b>Assault on Precinct 13</b>	Focus Features	2005
<b>The Ice Princess</b>	Walt Disney Pictures	2005
<b>The Perfect Man</b>	Universal Pictures	2005
<b>Beast Legends Series</b>	The History Channel	2010
<b>Let Me In</b>	Icon Productions	2010
<b>The Nautilus</b>	Hallmark Keepsakes	2011

## GAMES

<b>FIFA 2006</b>	Electronic Arts	2005
<b>NHL 07 (VTAR)</b>	Electronic Arts	2006
<b>World Cup 07 (VTAR)</b>	Electronic Arts	2006
<b>March Madness 07</b>	Electronic Arts	2006

<b>Mass Effect</b>	Bioware Corp.	2007
<b>Dragon Age: Origins</b>	Bioware ULC	2009
<b>Mass Effect 2</b>	Bioware ULC	2010
<b>Mass Effect 3</b>	Bioware ULC	2012
<b>Resistance 3</b>	Insomniac Games	2011
<b>Fuse</b>	Insomniac Games	2013
<b>Sunset Overdrive</b>	Insomniac Games	2014
<b>The Long Dark</b>	Hinterland Games	2017

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## EDUCATION

### Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (Oakville, ON)

- Post-Graduate Certificate, Digital Visual Effects** 2003 – 2004
- Managed 6 people to produce a short film
  - Studied 3D tracking, MEL, HRDI, target removal, stabilizing, camera mapping, 3D compositing
- Post-Graduate Certificate, Computer Animation** 2002 – 2003
- Studied character modeling, rigging and animation
- Diploma, Illustration (Technical and Scientific)** 1999 – 2002
- Studied anatomy and life drawing, model making and package design, architectural illustration, blueprint reading, and traditional airbrush and technical line techniques.

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## PERSONAL ENDEAVOURS

- Self-study into Deep learning and how it can be applied to visual mediums and DCC, 93% on CIFAR-10, Artistic style transfer for texture mutation and cheap look development of art styles (2015-present)
- GDC Houdini booth presentation “Non-Traditional uses on The Long Dark” (2018)
- Created the Tutorial Series - Zbrush Advanced Workflows (2008)
- Graduate of the Scott Eaton digital figure sculpture and anatomy course (2013)
- Judging panel member for the Sinister Circle forum art contest (2009)
- Deep interest in facial animation, FACS, facial mocap, photogrammetry, performance capture, photo-realism, proceduralism, computer vision, muscle systems and simulation, automation
- For many years I have helped a number of Software developers with general beta testing and guidance in tools design. Some developers include: SideFX, Pixologic, The Foundry, Allegorithmic, and Headus

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## SELECTED AWARDS AND HONOURS

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|--|-------------|
| Invited presenter SideFX Houdini Hive Booth GDC 2018               | 2018        |
| “Good Job” page interview and profile in Game Developer magazine   | 2011        |
| Recognition Stock Award, Bioware ULC                               | 2009        |
| Appearance on episode of X-play (G4 Tech TV) “Will work for games” | 2008        |
| Artwork in Electronic Gaming Monthly magazine “Mass Effect”        | 2006        |
| Featured in Vfxworld.com article “Mudbox Preview”                  | 2006        |
| Student Ambassador for Computer Animation Program                  | 2002 – 2003 |
| Selected to greet Queen Elizabeth II at Sheridan College           | 2002        |
| Royal Bank Art Award   | 1999        |

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## REFERENCES

Available upon request