**TANNER ELLISON – COMPREHENSIVE RESUME  
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**Neon Machine – Weapon Art Director / Art Lead***Dec 2021 – Mar 2025 | Seattle, WA | On-Site | Project: Shrapnel (Live-Service Extraction FPS, UE5)*

* **First Production Artist & Early Direction**: Brought on as the first artist at Neon Media to help define the visual identity of *Shrapnel*. Established early art direction for weapons, armor, tactical equipment, key environment pieces, characters, and iconography. Worked directly on defining the game's grounded, near-future sci-fi aesthetic during pre-production and the initial vertical slice. Contributed to all parts of prototyping in the earliest phases of development of art tools, collectables, and gameplay.
* **Art Leadership & Team Building**: Built and led a global weapon, equipment, and cosmetics art team spanning four countries, including internal staff, external partners, and contractors. Directed all visual aspects of weapons, equipment, and cosmetics from concept through implementation. Managed hiring, onboarding, training, mentoring, and performance reviews. Oversaw concept pipelines and real-time asset production, delivering paintovers, daily feedback, and art documentation. Shaped workflows and pipelines for live-service content delivery, game engine/project, and multi-discipline collaboration. Managed scheduling, asset tracking, and source control.
* **Hands-On Execution**: Designed/concepted, modeled, textured, and implemented the initial suite of weapons, skins, and player equipment into Unreal Engine 5. Created clean and highly optimized real-time geometry for traditional and Nanite meshes, authored collision manually where needed, and ensured performance stability for first- and third-person assets. Built custom, modular material systems to empower rapid iteration and customization leading to efficient, inexpensive Unreal shaders when compiling.  Developed UV layouts specifically optimized for cosmetics customization, enabling the production of hundreds of visual variants. Built and implemented skeletal meshes, physics assets, and engine data setups for gear and attachments. Created a real-time Weapon Gym level used by the studio to evaluate content under gameplay and lighting conditions.
* **Cosmetic Systems & Monetization**: Solely responsible for the look and execution of all in-game cosmetics which was the project’s primary revenue stream. Directed the creation of hundreds of weapon skins, charms, stickers, and rarity cosmetic tiers. Created the visual economy for battle passes and rarity tiers and user progression visual feedback, shaping incentives and engagement loops through cosmetic design.
* **Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration**: Worked closely with tech art, animation, VFX, engineering, and character leads to integrate art systems into gameplay and UI/UX. Co-developed a weapon customization and attachment system to maintain clarity and modularity. Collaborated with engineers, designers, and the character team to establish a User Generated Content (UGC) pipeline enabling players to create and apply their own skins for weapons and characters.
* **Marketing & Visual Identity**: Created early visual branding and key art that shaped the game's external identity across promotional websites, trailers, and product pages. Designed and produced physical props (including CAD-based 3D printable assets/props) for Neon Machine’s award-winning live-action short film, bridging the gap between in-game content and real-world storytelling.
* **Style Guides & Technical Documentation**: Authored studio-wide best practices for 3D art production, Unreal Engine setup, asset organization protocols (source and in-engine), naming conventions, and performance targets. Established foundational documentation for modeling pipelines, texturing, skeletal mesh conventions, and scalable live-service content delivery.

**Freelance Senior Production Artist – Virtual Production, VR/AR, and Game Development***Mar 2019 – Dec 2021 | Remote & On-Site | Project: Various IPs*

Delivered high-quality concepting, 3D content, and technical art solutions for a variety of clients across games, television, virtual reality, and real-time virtual production. Specialized in creating optimized, engine-ready environments, props, and hero assets for pre-rendered scenes as well as Unity and Unreal Engine pipelines. Worked closely with directors, engineers, and cross-disciplinary teams to build immersive, performant content for both interactive and cinematic workflows.

**Clients Include**:  
*Marvel*, *Neon Machine / Stargate Studios*, *Nexus Studios*, *Paramount* */* *Skydance*, *Disney*

* **Modeling & Texturing**: Created high-fidelity props, environment kits, and hero assets for use in VR, gameplay, and in-camera VFX. Focused on clean topology, efficient UV layouts, high quality textures, and modularity for scene reusability and quick iteration.
* **Real-Time Lighting & Materials**: Built real-time lighting setups and authored complex material systems using Unreal Engine’s material editor. Designed **cinematic-quality scenes optimized for both real-time rendering and virtual production**.
* **Virtual Production (VP)**: Concepted and built fully realized scenes for use on **LED volumes and VP stages**. Integrated custom LUTs, post-processing, and real-world camera data to align Unreal scenes with on-set visuals. Frequently present on-set to troubleshoot lighting, playback, and Unreal performance during filming.
* **FX & Cinematic Elements**: Created stylized and grounded **real-time FX using Niagara and Cascade**, supporting storytelling and environmental realism. Implemented weather systems, atmosphere, and background motion to support VP or VR scenes.
* **Scene Assembly & Optimization**: Handled full **Unreal Engine scene setup**, including level streaming, world composition, asset placement, and optimization for real-time playback. Ensured stable framerates and visual consistency in demanding production contexts.
* **Cross-Platform Production Art**: Delivered content for use in **games, TV, immersive VR/AR, previsualization, and film pipelines**. Adapted workflows and asset standards to meet each project’s performance and visual targets.

**HBO – Associate Art Director, Technology and Immersive Experiences***June 2014 – August 2019 | Seattle, WA | On-Site | Projects/IP: Westworld, Game Of Thrones, Boardwalk Empire, True Detective, Sharp Objects, Room 108, various others.*

* **Multidisciplinary Content & R&D Role**: Core creative member of HBO’s internal technology team, functioning as an R&D and production support group for emerging tech across VR, game engines, set extensions, and real-time pipelines. Delivered a broad range of real-time and offline content for internal tools, show support, marketing, and experimental media.
* **Real-Time Pipeline & Game Engine Innovation**: Served as a primary Unreal Engine and Unity expert, introducing real-time workflows into internal pipelines years before virtual production became standard. Led internal development of interactive experiences and prototypes using UE4, including VR games, mobile projects, AAA marketing tie-ins, and cinematic scenes.Built full environment sets, characters, lighting, materials, and effects in engine with high performance for VR headsets and runtime applications.
* **Digital Set Extensions & Virtual Production Foundations**: Led the creation of high-fidelity digital doubles of sets from shows including *Westworld* and *Room 104*, built entirely in Unreal Engine 4. Responsible for all modeling, texturing, lighting (baked and dynamic), and scene optimization for virtual production and AR overlays during filming. Scenes were used in early-stage augmented reality and previsualization workflows—laying groundwork for future virtual production at HBO.
* **Award-Winning Contributions**: Received a **Primetime Emmy Award** for work on *Westworld*, as part of a small, multidisciplinary team delivering innovative real-time content and advanced visualization tools. Acted as a bridge between technology teams, directors, and producers to translate narrative ideas into cutting-edge visual tools.
* **Advanced Asset Conversion & IP Support**: Adapted and optimized VFX assets from flagship shows (*Game of Thrones*, *Westworld*, etc.) for use in VR and interactive environments. Created pitch content and visual prototypes for potential franchise extensions, including internal presentations for *Game of Thrones* spin-off concepts.
* **Photogrammetry & Asset Archiving**: Piloted the use of drone-based aerial photogrammetry for virtual set scouting (notably for *Sharp Objects*) and conducted screen-used prop scanning for archival and digital reuse. Digitally reconstructed hero props from *Game of Thrones* and other series for use in marketing, interactive displays, and digital preservation efforts.
* **Technical Art & Infrastructure Support**: Partnered with engineering to architect an in-house render farm for Octane and other offline render tools, supporting high-res content needs across the company. Managed source control and file organization for all internal Unreal Engine projects. Provided direction and mentorship to junior team members and collaborators.
* **Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration**: Worked closely with television and film directors, producers/creative teams, marketing, and technology vendors. Scouted and evaluated emerging tech partners and creative partners, including on-site visits and R&D partnerships, to keep HBO at the forefront of production innovation.

**Z2 – Game Artist***Feb 2014 – Jun 2014 | Seattle, WA | On-Site | Projects/IP: Mobile city builder strategy game(unreleased Battle Nations successor)*

Contributed a large volume of stylized, high-impact work to a new mobile strategy IP in early development. Modeled, UV’d, and textured buildings, hero vehicles, and environment assets while driving visual quality and performance across the board.

* **Modular Asset Design:** Designed and modeled upgradeable structures that visually evolved across multiple in-game states, supporting key city-building gameplay loops.
* **Stylized Visual Development:** Helped define a unique, expressive style through asset design, stylization, and iteration in the absence of dedicated concept art.
* **Mobile Optimization:** Built assets with performance in mind, utilizing shared UV space, trim sheets, and texture atlases to meet tight memory and draw call budgets.
* **Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration:** Worked closely with a small team of designers, artists, and engineers to bring the game world to life within rapid prototyping cycles.

**Valkyrie Entertainment** **–** **Game Artist, Art Direction***May 2011 – Nov 2013 | Seattle, WA | On-Site | Projects: Various across all platforms*

Outsourcing-focused art generalist contributing to over a dozen shipped and unannounced titles across a range of genres, platforms, and visual styles. Worked hands-on in multiple engines—often simultaneously—handling everything from sculpting and modeling to lighting, materials, level layout, and art direction. Known for versatility, high-quality execution, and ability to quickly adapt pipelines to client needs.

* **Environment & Level Art** Delivered end-to-end environment and level work including world building, set dressing, prop placement, and lighting. Created terrain and architectural elements, built physically based material systems, and managed visual cohesion across modular level components. Optimized scenes to meet FPS and actor count targets for PS3, Xbox 360, PC, and mobile.
* **Modeling & Texturing** Produced high-quality characters, weapons, vehicles, and props using high-poly sculpting, low-poly modeling, and texture baking techniques. Skilled in UV layout, LODs, and optimization workflows for console and mobile constraints. Built custom materials and complex UV sets across various proprietary and commercial engines.
* **Cross-Engine Experience** Fluent in Unreal Engine 3, Unity, proprietary engines and authoring tools, and custom pipelines. Regularly worked within unfamiliar toolsets, documenting and sharing workflows with teams. Engine-side tasks included lighting, FX placement, cinematic setup, and performance profiling on dev kits.
* **Leadership & Direction**Directed small environment art pods and took on client-facing lead responsibilities. Provided visual targets and early conceptual direction for client review. Involved in team-level art direction on multiplayer maps and thematic level zones for major IPs.
* **Client-Facing & High Velocity** Delivered content in tight cycles for clients including Turn 10, Warner Bros. Montreal, Kabam, Riot, LucasArts, Sony, and others. Juggled multiple projects and pipelines simultaneously, switching art styles and production expectations fluidly.
* **Select Titles & Responsibilities**
  + *Guns Up |* Sony (PS4, PC, Mobile) — Prototyping, animation, rigging,early character art
  + *Forza Motorsport 5* | Turn 10 Studios (Xbox One) — Team lead, hero assets, architecture modeling, terrain sculpting, physically based materials, point cloud interpretation, source control
  + *Batman: Arkham Origins* | WB Montreal (PC, PS3, 360) — Prop modeling, vehicles, lighting, lightmass light baking, narrative set decoration, optimization, general Unreal Engine 3 work, source control
  + *Imperium: Galactic War* | Kabam (PC) — Pipeline development, offline rendering, materials, lighting, FX, documentation
  + *Lost Planet 3* | Spark Unlimited (PC, PS3, 360) — Multiplayer level design, 3D environment art,  lighting, lightmass baking, performance optimization, general Unreal Engine 3 work
  + *Ascend: Hand of Kul* | Signal Studios (360) — 3D weapon concept and visual target creation
  + *Murdered: Soul Suspect* | Airtight Games (PC, PS3, 360) — Prop and interior asset work
  + *Star Wars Kinect* | LucasArts (360) — Cinematic characters, vehicle art, world building, level dressing
  + *Sorcery* | Sony Workshop (PS3) — Art direction, materials, lighting, set dressing, general Unreal Engine 3 work
  + *League of Legends* | Riot Games (PC) — Character art, hero props, environment assets
  + *Battlefield 3* | Dice (PC, PS3, 360) — lighting geometry, optimization
  + *Cowboys & Aliens* | Freeplay, C&A Labs (iOS) — Full pipeline: characters, props, weapons, animation, rendering
  + *Multiple Unannounced/Unreleased Titles* — Generalist 3D work across environments, props, animation, rigging

**KEXP — Host, Producer, DJ | Seek & Destroy***2009–Present | Seattle, WA | On-Site | KEXP 90.3 FM Seattle / KEXP 92.7 FM San Francisco*

Host and creator of *Seek & Destroy*, KEXP’s long-running weekly, specialty metal show, broadcast live across two major U.S. markets (Seattle and San Francisco) and streamed globally to a devoted international audience. Over the last 15+ years, I’ve curated, produced, and delivered a consistently high-quality, fiercely independent live program on one of the world’s most respected listener-powered radio stations.

* Lead producer, curator, and on-air talent for all aspects of *Seek & Destroy*, from concept and programming to execution, music curation, and content delivery.
* Simultaneously broadcasting to Seattle (90.3 FM) and the newly launched San Francisco (92.7 FM) station, adjusting show tone and selections to serve and grow audiences in both regions.
* Deeply research and champion underground, extreme, and overlooked music and artists from around the globe, bringing niche, non-commercial scenes into the spotlight.
* Coordinate and lead a small production team of volunteers to maintain consistent weekly output that meets KEXP’s high standards of programming, mission alignment, and audience connection.
* Host and produce live in-studio performances, interviews, and exclusive content that is distributed across KEXP’s digital platforms including YouTube (3.5M+ subscribers) and blog.
* Actively engage with the community and listeners via events, social media, and listener correspondence, fostering a loyal audience and a passionate artistic network.
* Provide creative oversight for all Seek & Destroy content, including special episodes, in-studio live performances, live DJ sets, interviews, and editorial segments.
* Contribute to broader KEXP content initiatives, representing the heavy/extreme music community within KEXP’s diverse programming ecosystem.

**Awards and Education**

* **Primetime Emmy Award**, Outstanding Creative Achievement in Interactive Media (Westworld VR)
* BFA – Game Art and Design, Art Institute of Seattle | 2008- 2011
* Ongoing education via R&D, industry partnerships, and various tool-specific certifications

**Core Skills & Expertise**

**Visual Development & Design Thinking**Industrial design-informed concepting • Narrative worldbuilding • Form language exploration • Silhouette & gesture design • Design systems for weapons, gear & props • Visual storytelling • Tasteful execution grounded in believability

**3D Asset Creation & Execution**High-poly sculpting • Game-res modeling • Retopology • UV unwrapping • Trim sheets • PBR material workflows • Texture baking & surfacing • Photogrammetry cleanup • Modular & optimized production-ready assets

**Technical Art & Implementation**High-to-low pipeline ownership • Material authoring • Blueprint integration (basic to intermediate) • Full Lighting Design and Implimentation • LODs, optimization, & performance constraints • Engine-side polish & implementation

**Creative Direction & Art Leadership**Aesthetic ownership & vision setting • Defining and championing cohesive visual direction across products • Cross-discipline collaboration with design/narrative/tech/audio to unify player experience • Establishing style guide creation, documentation and visual language systems • Driving quality through clear pipelines, feedback, and hands-on guidance • Mentorship and team growth • Building culture & team trust

**Narrative Worldbuilding & Contextual Design**Environmental storytelling • Artifact-driven narrative • Diegetic design systems • Lore-aware item design • Cohesive visual storytelling across factions, settings & timelines

**Production & Pipeline Development**Toolchain planning • Art pipeline documentation • Working across time zones & cultures • Milestone scoping & visual targets • Hands-on art production while directing others • Production-aware decision making

**Tools & Software**

**Modeling & Sculpting**ZBrush • Blender • Maya • Plasticity • Marvelous Designer • Moi3D

**Texturing & Baking**Substance 3D Painter (primary) • Substance Designer • Marmoset Toolbag • Adobe Photoshop • RizomUV • Quixel Mixer • xNormal

**Rendering & Lookdev**Octane • I-Ray • Keyshot • Marmoset Toolbag

**Game Engines**Unreal Engine 5 (primary) • Unity • Proprietary engines

**Project Management & Collaboration**Perforce • Git • Jira • Confluence • Miro • Trello

**Concept & Presentation Tools** Photoshop • PureRef • Procreate • Illustrator