



Entertainement published an investor letter that revealed their latest game, Control, reached an audience of 10 million people. I'm confident the game has managed to win a special place in the hearts of many, as it sure has in mine. As the game's second anniversary draws closer, headlines that state success makes it easy to forget how risky Control was for Remedy. Fortunately for them (and us - considering how good the game is), it paid off.

I've been a fan of Remedy for a large part of my life, so perhaps I am biased. But *Control* is an experience like no other. The number of awards it has managed to snag in the last few months testify to that. The studio managed to encapsulate a complex, layered narrative. Tense and smooth gameplay. A fascinating environment, rich with atmosphere, variety, and a fleshed-out universe. All while reducing development time and venturing in unexplored waters. The premise of *Control* was new to Remedy but required as the changing gaming industry demanded flexibility. In that regard, *Quantum Break* and *Alan Wake* had taught Remedy valuable lessons. The Finland-based studio no longer deemed it healthy to be spending a large part of their time and resources on one project.

For me, one of the game's highlights is the cast. In the early stages of the game's development, Creative Director Sam Lake and Game Director Mikael Kasurinen decided to continue working with Courtney Hope. Hope played Beth Wilder in *Quantum Break* and was seemingly the perfect fit as the game's protagonist, Jesse Faden. The studio also

hired Matthew Poretta (Alan Wake) and James McCaffrey (Max Payne) to create an all-star Remedy ensemble. The three actors are in large part responsible for the game's gravitas and its unique quirkiness. One could say, through previous experiences, Remedy knew precisely in what role to put the talent to get the best out of them.

The studio provided me with a copy of Control for review weeks before the game would hit shelves. It was difficult not to talk with the community about all the secrets I'd found. Together we have solved puzzles and fantasized about many aspects of trailers and screenshots. Yet, here I stumbled upon the first hints of what is now known as the Remedy Connected Universe. Even though Control was a more contained experience, this revelation would set the tone of every Remedy game yet to come. That's incredibly exciting. Especially considering Remedy is working on plenty of videogames! A few weeks prior, Remedy announced they started developing two new projects set in the world of Control. The studio is also working on two games in partnership with Epic. Thus, it's probable these games will push the narrative started in Control forward. Characters past and present will stay with us for years to

There's much to love about *Control*, but if one thing stands out, it has to be the people who made it. I've been following many of them for years, and to see them flourish has been an incredible experience on its own. When developing *Max Payne*, the studio consisted of a hand full of people. These days, several teams of hundreds are working on different projects simultaneously. Talent from all over the world has brought new ideas, and as their work reaches more people, the community grows. I feel incredibly humbled to be part of a group with whom I can share this passion. Years later, their games still inspire people to create beautiful art pieces, write touching poems, or the most lifelike cosplays. Recently we've celebrated the 20th anniversary of *Max Payne*. Everybody chipped in, even James McCaffrey!

That brings us full circle with *Control's* second anniversary. I can't wait to see what the community has in store. I was more than happy to contribute by writing this article.



CONTEST

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY





JUDGING GUIDELINES

We are looking for something unique. As the game has been out for two years already there have been many many photos shared online. We are looking for that one shot that can still surprise us and has not been done yet.

Here are the questions we will ask ourselves when looking at the photos:

- (-) **UNIQUENESS OF MOTIVE** Have you seen this photo idea before or is it completely new?
- (-) **DIFFICULTY OF CREATION –** Was some game or photomode trick used to create this that is only uncovered by good knowledge of the game's specialties (e. g. visual effects created by Hiss entities or secret locations)?
- (-) **COMPOSITION** Does the photo follow compositional rules or intentionally break them to create a certain effect/feeling?
- (-) **COLOUR** Control has a very definite and perfectly executed colour language, was this used to the photographers advantage to create a certain effect/feeling (including the choice of photomode filter)?
- (-) **REPRESENTATION** Does the photo portray the Control art style?

SUBMISSION

Photos must be submitted through Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #TCCinControl during the submission period.

CONDITIONS

The photo must be taken with the in-game photomode.

JURY

The final winners will be chosen from these finalists by Elmeri Raitanen (Lead VFX Artist at Remedy Entertainment and Art Director of Control's expansions).

PRIZES

The winners will be notified through Twitter and Instagram private messengers.

The submission period starts on 27th August 12PM CEST and ends on 6th September 6PM CEST.

- (1) **External tools for camera or shader control** (e. g. camera hacks, ReShade) are not allowed and entries submitted using these tools will be ignored.
- (2) **Rotation and cropping** with external tools is allowed. Vertical photos are accepted. All other use and correction with external tools is not allowed.
- (3) **Each participant can enter one photo.** Only the first submitted photo will be considered, multiple entries will be ignored.

All submissions will be viewed and a selection of 16 finalists chosen by the contest organising committee:

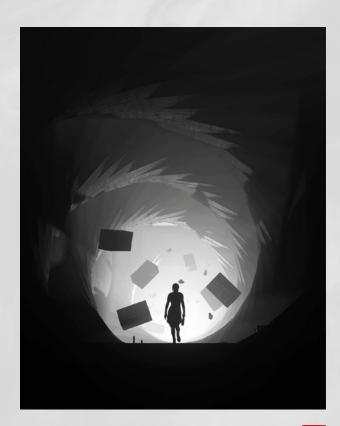
- (1) Matt @DarklinkN7 /DarkLinkN7
- (2) Maggie @HedaKeen /HedaKeen
- (3) **Dennis** @PeteyReilly /PeteyReilly13
- (4) Claire @NeoFulcrum
- (5) **Lisa** @AmazingDrLama
- (1) CONTROL Official Art Book
- (2) **CONTROL T-Shirt**
- 3) CONTROL snapback cap



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HONORABLE

They didn't make it but it was hard to let them go.



@ZAMPO1IT



@NAMIELSUSHI





@MDEAVORVP



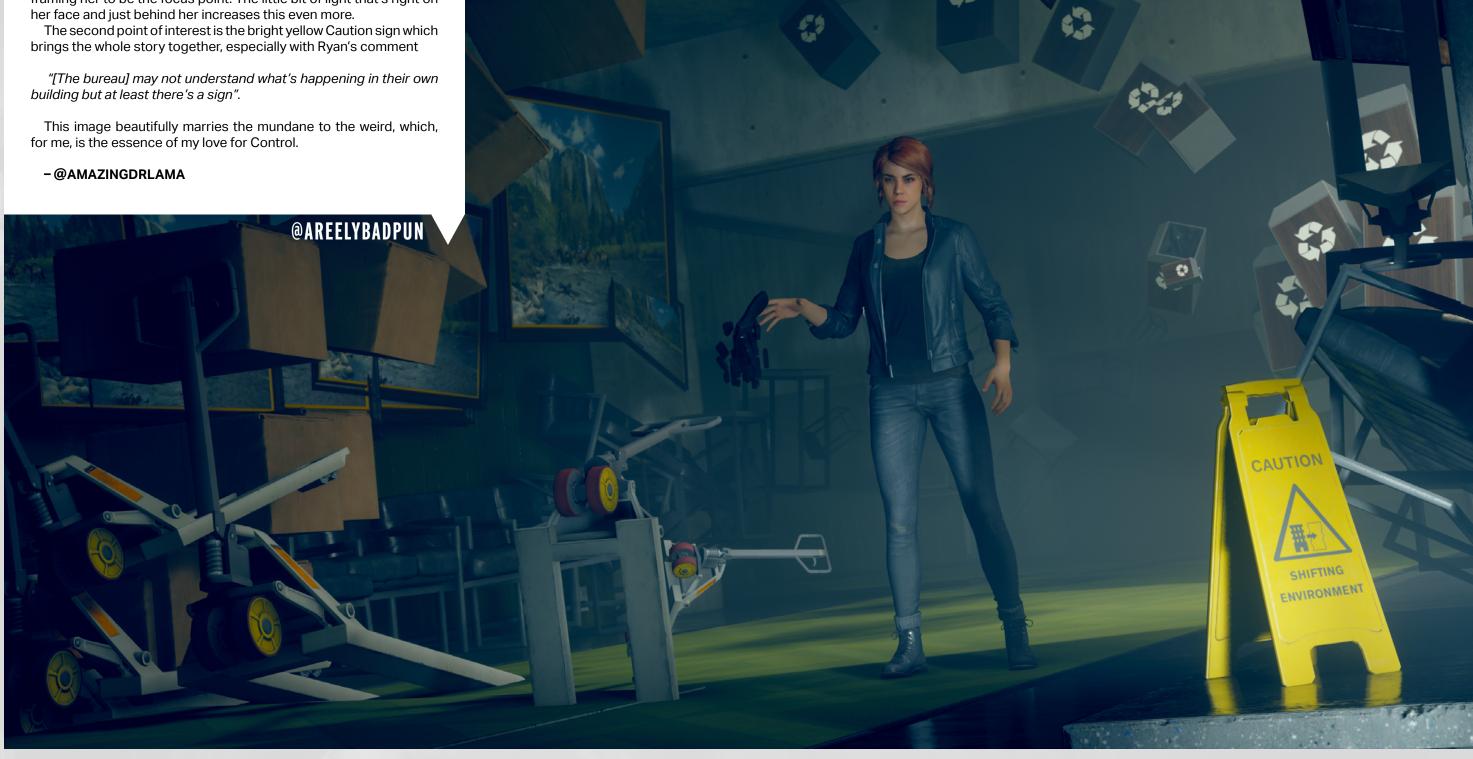


@TIMELOOPPLAYS



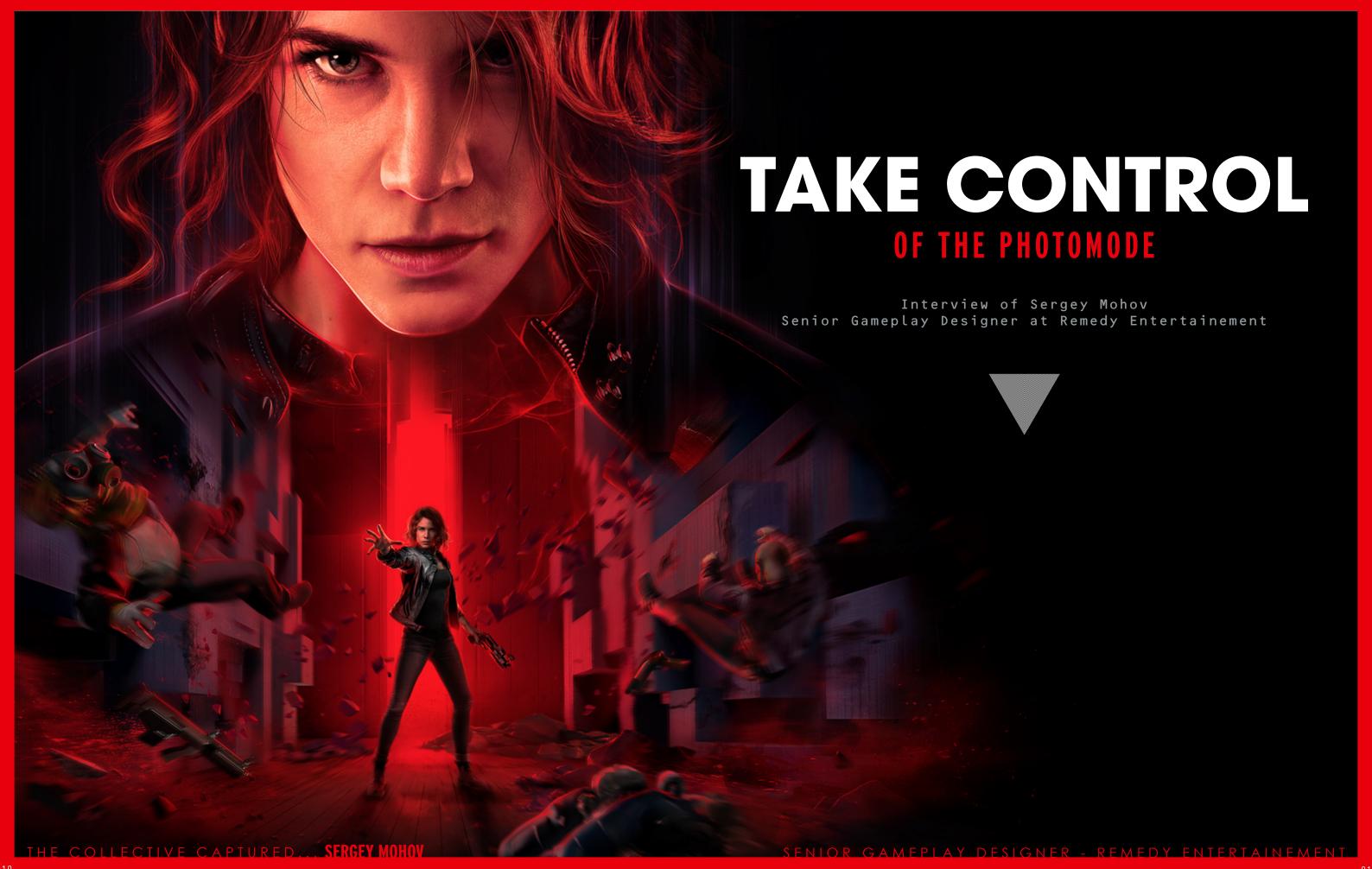
On first glance the image seems very simple, but I believe it must have been either of a painful struggle or really great luck to get the timing just right. With the shifting environment and Jesse changing her gun there is a lot of animations going on that could have ruined the composition if caught at the wrong moment.

But despite this difficulty, Ryan managed to form a perfect composition with the flying objects forming a circle around Jesse, framing her to be the focus point. The little bit of light that's right on her face and just behind her increases this even more.



Artistic Bureau of The Captured Collective, Europe Confidential (2) Document Archive COLLEC: MMN720161116

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1. THE PHOTOMODE IN CONTROL WAS ADDED AFTER LAUNCH. WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO CREATE A PHOTOMODE?

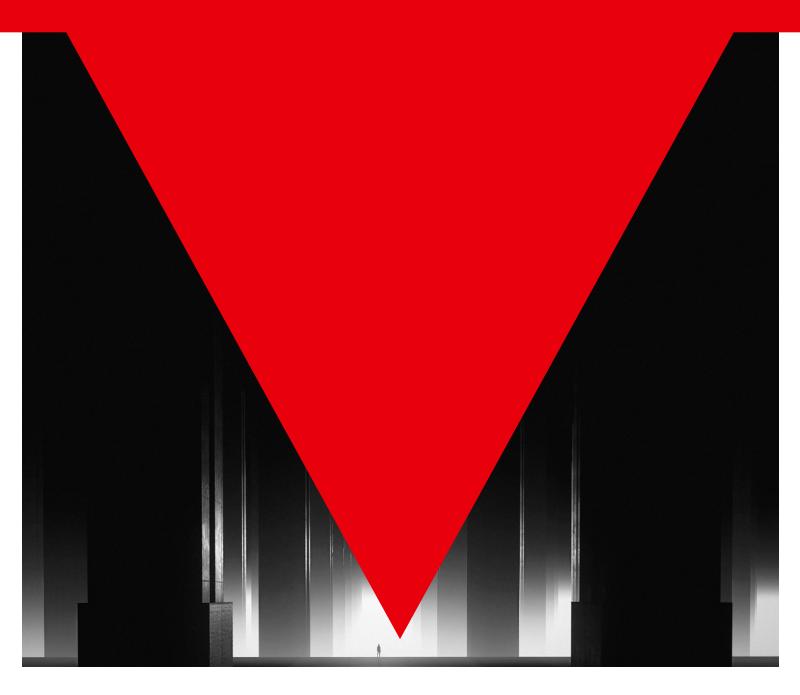
Sergey Mohov: The initiative and the idea to add a photo mode to the game came from our communications team. The first request came while Control was still in pre-production, so we always had it in the back of our minds. From the get-go, Control was supposed to be the longest-lasting, most systemic Remedy game ever and a basis for a franchise that could be expanded and include other titles. And when creating a franchise, it's essential to build a community around it. From that point of view, it was important to keep the players as engaged as we could and keep the conversation around the game going. I think that the addition of the photo mode contributed to that in a big way.

2. WHAT WAS YOUR ARTISTIC APPROACH AND DESIGN PROCESS BEHIND DECIDING WHAT FUNCTIONS TO INCLUDE IN THE PHOTOMODE?

Sergey Mohov: The goal was to give the players as many functions as we could. We had a small team working on this feature, and we had a minimal amount of time, so it was important to narrow the priorities down - otherwise, the feature wouldn't have been finished in time. We looked at other games that had photo modes we liked and identified the functions that we considered essential. We then implemented them in priority order, with general questions like "how do you open the photo mode?" and "how do you control the camera?" being answered before everything else. It all went very quickly: we got some support from the UX team, a pack of great filters from the VFX team, but nearly all the functionality of the feature was made by one gameplay coder in one week, and then tested inhouse and also by our friends outside of Remedy.

3. WAS THERE ONE FUNCTION THAT YOU WISHED YOU COULD INCLUDE BUT TECHNICAL OR OTHER LIMITATIONS PREVENTED IT?

Sergey Mohov: It's not a separate function, exactly. Still, it's something I wish we had had more time to test and iron out. Ideally, players would be able to move the camera as far away from their character as they want to while in photo mode, but there's currently an invisible wall preventing that. The reason for the wall's existence is that the chunk of the level where the player is may get unstreamed if the camera gets



far enough. This can lead to things like falling through the floor or visual glitches. It is probably a bad idea to make the distance completely unlimited, but I'm sure we could've extended it significantly with some more time to work with. I also wish we had the time to add things like poses, facial expressions, and special particle effects around the character.

4. DID YOU HAVE ONE OR MORE SPECIFIC GAMES AS ROLE MODELS FOR A PHOTOMODE?

Sergey Mohov: I love the photo modes in God of War (2018) and, more recently, Ghost of Tsushima. The latter came out after Control, but it is especially impressive when you add secondary motion and effects and play with the day and night cycle. It all

comes down to the number of options the player can play with and the variety of shots they can make with the photo mode.

5. HOW MUCH WERE YOU AWARE OF IN-GAME PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE COMMUNITY BEHIND IT BEFORE STARTING TO WORK ON THE PHOTOMODE AND WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CONTACT WITH IT?

Sergey Mohov: I was aware of it, but I never realized that it was as big and as active as it turned out to be. I open the Control subreddit nearly every day to see what people are talking about and what the community thinks. There are three or four threads with incredible photo mode shots on any given day.

My first contact with photo modes came when I

was working on Event[0], back in 2016. As the art director and vizdev guy on that project, it fell on me to make sure that the game looked great in screenshots and trailers. That game didn't have a photo mode of any kind, but before the game's release, a virtual photographer sent us an email offering to take shots of the game for us. I thought, why not, since it would make the game look good. They were able to take some incredible shots. But in another email, they asked if we were planning to add more controls to things like FOV, aperture length, focus distance, etc. It wasn't an option for an indie team like ours at the time, but it planted the seed in my head. When working on Control's photo mode, I kept thinking back on that encounter and hoping that the feature we were making would be good enough.

6. CONTROL IS FAMOUS FOR BEING WEIRD - VISUALLY AND NARRATIVELY. IS THIS SOMETHING YOU WANTED THE PLAYERS TO BE ABLE TO SHOWCASE BY CREATING THE PHOTOMODE AND ARE YOU SURPRISED BY THE WAY PLAYERS DO THIS?

Sergey Mohov: Oh yes, for sure. Some of my favorite shots people have made are of our enemies: in a fast-paced third-person shooter, you rarely get a good look at them since they are pretty far away and can kill you quite fast. The photo mode sprung up anatomy and visual detail discussions on things like the Hiss Distorted and Hiss Charged, which has enhanced people's perception of the game's lore, gameplay, and visuals. I can't say that I'm surprised that people would want to take those close-up shots, but I certainly didn't expect that to start such exciting conversations within the community.

7. WAS THERE ONE SPECIFIC PHOTO OR MOMENT THAT REALLY STUCK WITH YOU REGARDING THE PHOTOMODE?

Sergey Mohov: There's a marketing shot that our art department made before the release of the game, where you first enter the Research Sector, and the layout of the room frames a staircase and two giant redwood trees growing in the lobby, creating an illusion that you're standing on the inside of a giant cube. I keep noticing that almost every player who posts their collection of screenshots on Twitter and on Reddit has very different things they tend to focus on, but nearly all of them recreate a version of that shot. It reminds me of art exhibitions where the same artist recreates different versions of the same

photograph or painting, or various artists offer their unique views of a shared subject.

I think the architecture and vista in that place just make it irresistible for people who always have an iPhone in their pocket and Instagram at the ready. It's funny that this reflex extends into the virtual world.

8. IN THE END SOMETHING WE ALL WISH FOR AND HOPE YOU ARE ALLOWED TO ANSWER, WILL THE NEXT REMEDY GAME ALSO HAVE A PHOTOMODE, MAYBE EVEN AT LAUNCH?

Sergey Mohov: I certainly hope so! Video game productions are complex and expensive, which is why you sometimes see auxiliary features like photo modes and New Game+ modes pushed to further updates. But now that we have seen the response from the community, we will work even harder to make it happen.

9. AND IF THE ANSWER TO THE PREVIOUS OUESTION IS YES (WHAT WE ALL ARE HOPING FOR), ARE YOU REVIEWING THE INCLUDED FUNCTIONS WITH WHAT YOU SAW THE COMMUNITY

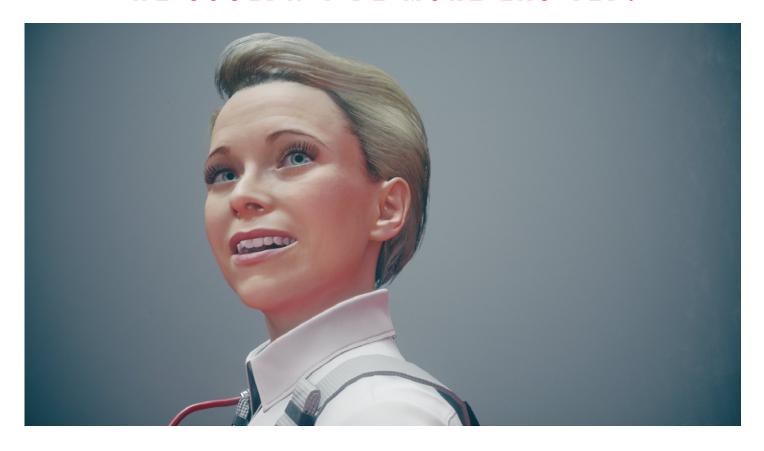
CREATED AND WISHED FOR WITH THE CURRENT PHOTOMODE VERSION?

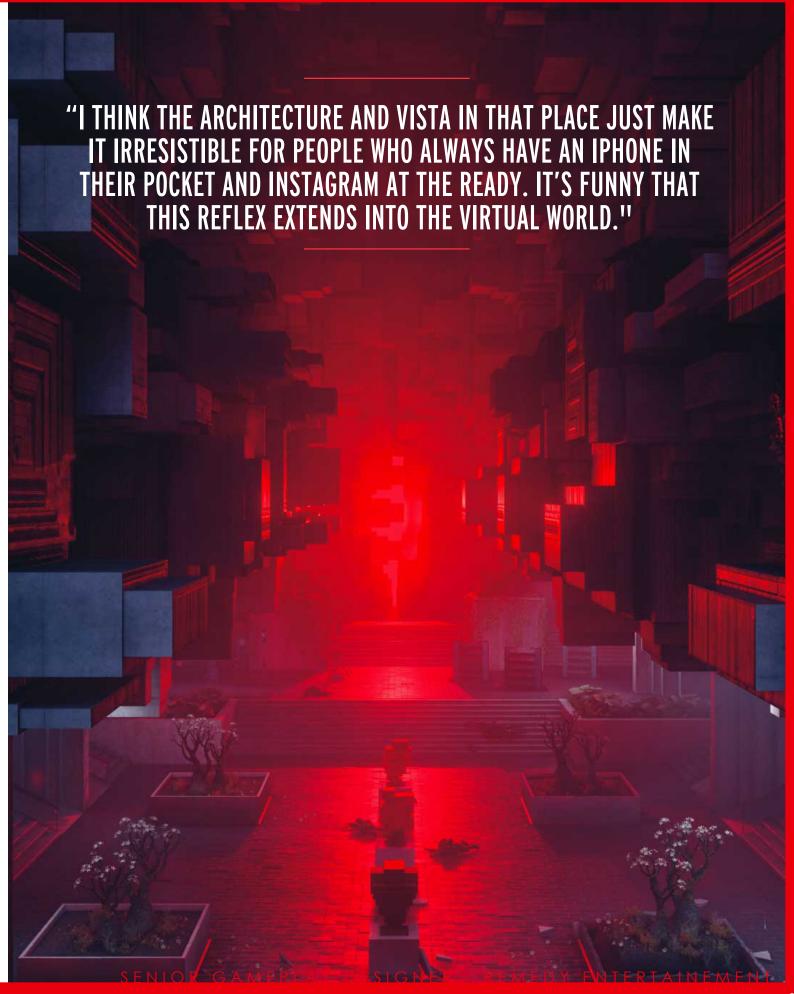
Sergey Mohov: Yes, absolutely. If I get to work on a photo mode again, I will do everything to push for extended camera distances and add more fun options for people to play with. The reality of production might impose its limitations, but the promise I can make is that I will personally do my best.

10. LAST QUESTION - DO YOU WISH SOMETHING FROM THE VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY? SOMETHING LIKE "SHOW ME MORE LAUNCH!" OR "GIVE ME MORE PORTRAITS OF LANGSTON!"? WE WOULD HAPPILY OBLIGE!

Sergey Mohov: I would love it if someone made a photo series about different kinds of Bureau Rangers, Guards, Snipers, and Demolition Experts. I think that it's hard to appreciate how many different types of these human enemies (and friends) there are in the game while you play it, but they actually have quite a bit of nuance and visual variety to them.

WE COULDN'T BE MORE EXCITED!





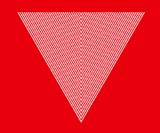
THE COLLECTIVE CAPTURED... SERGEY MOHOV

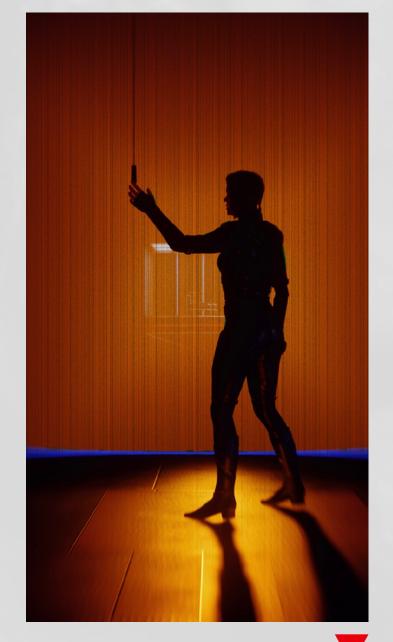
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MEET THE FINALISTS

Out of the following 16 shots selected by The Captured Collective team, 10 were picked by Dr. Amazing Lama to be sent to Remedy Entertainement.













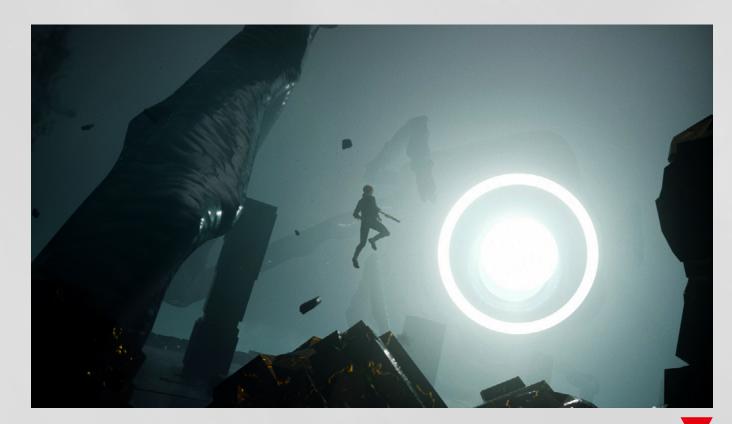




@VG_FOTOGRAPHY



@SHIK.GAMING



@SITRIGA V



@DRCALIGARI72



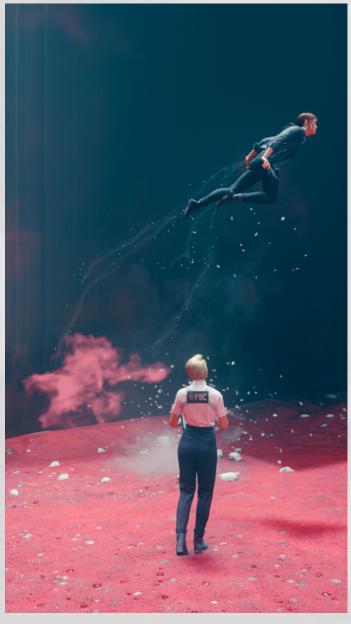
@EMERALDENVOY



@HDIMIT11 🔻















@SKALLEDIT

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The most important stage of a contest is to take part in it. To have the willpower and the courage to expose yourself out there. For that, we are very proud of you all.

Thank you everyone for taking part in our first ever Virtual Photography contest. It was - we're sure - as much of a challenge for you as it has been for us. We are all happy to have been able to bring each and every one of you together!

No matter what's to come, you all did a wonderful job and we hope to feature you again in our upcoming projects.



Stay kind, stay true and remember... *Everyone is welcome.*

- THE CAPTURED COLLECTIVE Matt, Heda, Peter & NeoFulcrum



SHOT BY DARKLINKN7 CAPTURING THE BEAUTIFUL WORLDS OF VIDEO GAMES. - NOTTINGHAM, UK

THE AWE IN CONTROL

touch you. Pressing the Clicker brought the light back and gave sanctuary, allowing Wake to travel and piece together pieces of his story. The daylight was also sparingly used, but beautiful, giving the Pacific Northwest a warm and friendly glow that Wake even describes as "a beautiful place. I told myself I could rest here, sleep here, and forget about my work. I thought we could be happy here."

In Quantum Break, peace could be found in time stutters. These were moments of gameplay where everything stopped, except for Jack. Everything would be a little faded and sounds would slowly ring out across a broken mirror-like sky. Stutters could be weaponized in the game and cause destruction when unfrozen, but they also provided a salvation a number of times for Jack allowing him to catch his breath.

In Control, peace is different. Peace can either be found in the familiar, whether that's co-workers meeting up and checking in with one another or in the quiet empty office spaces. It's the stepping stones we use to jump to across a river of uncertainty. The everyday and the extraordinary. Without them we have no basis to scale the weirdness on.

And that matters, especially when the weirdness is so... weird. In previous games, enemies have a clear humanoid shape, whether they were under the influence of Valkyr, shadowy axe-wielding mechanics, or Shifters. While the Hiss has taken over FBC staff, similar to how the Dark Presence form The Taken, they are physically changed, almost to the point of body-horror as it corrupts their mind. Underneath their skin burns red, the body reduced to a shell in which a different entity controls, and they're fuelled with supernatural powers making their actions unpredictable. That familiar endless chant that snakes its way through the corridors and the ominous blood red light that floods the corrupted sectors is haunting, and it's presented on the perfect blank canvas, The Oldest House, with its straight lines and concrete that really make these elements stand out.

The world of Control

contained

is a mixture of contrasts.

and shapeless, dingy but

occasionally blindingly bright.

It's both familiar and completely

alien, beautiful and utterly dull.

While there are games that thrive

on exploring different countries with

vast and lush landscapes, Control is set

inside a single building, a single... office

building, shaped in concrete and faceless.

Welcome to The Oldest House, a mix of both

old and new. Around the grey toned walls are

old style posters warning of otherworldly threats

and mould infestation, the kind that you walk past

every day talking about how much office paper was saved from printing while in lockdown or reminding

you that this is an inclusive workplace. Plants are

decorated around the various rooms to bring life to

the place, and they work, but also work in contrast

to the lifeless and ruthless feel of the brutalist

architecture. The rooms feel lived in, not just as part

of a nine-to-five occupation, but through overtime

and early hours. It's not necessarily a friendly place,

a room filled with post-it notes reveal a frazzled

state of a staff member, warnings that house

shifts not excusing late deadlines, and there's an

understanding that people in the bureau just go

missing. But there's parts of it that is recognisably

dull and familiar from an office job; the uniform, the

crowded desks, the long to do lists, and especially

In Alan Wake, daylight was the protagonist and

player's comfort. During the day, nothing could

those bright fluorescent lights.

both

lt's

"ALL OF THIS AND MORE MAKES CONTROL A VISUALLY STUNNING GAME, AND REALLY ADDS TO THE MYSTERY THAT PLAYERS THRIVE ON WHEN THEY EXPLORE THE FBC'S CORRIDORS."

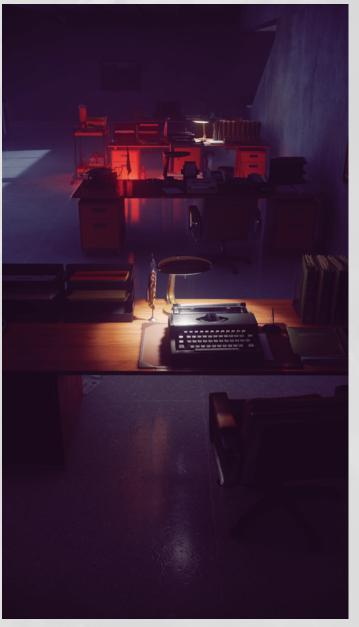
This is particularly effective at the start of the game, just following Jesse's promotion (of sorts) as the new Director of the bureau. Until leaving Trench's former office, the building had been nothing of particular interest about the building; the occasional off vibe, but all easily dusted off by the player. Armed with the Service Weapon, Jesse steps out of the office and is immediately thrown into battle as the seemingly ordinary corridor before is now flooded by red, Hiss suspended in mid-air, the oppressive chanting becoming stronger. It's a striking scene and is delivered so bluntly that it tears open the curtain that something very wrong has happened here.

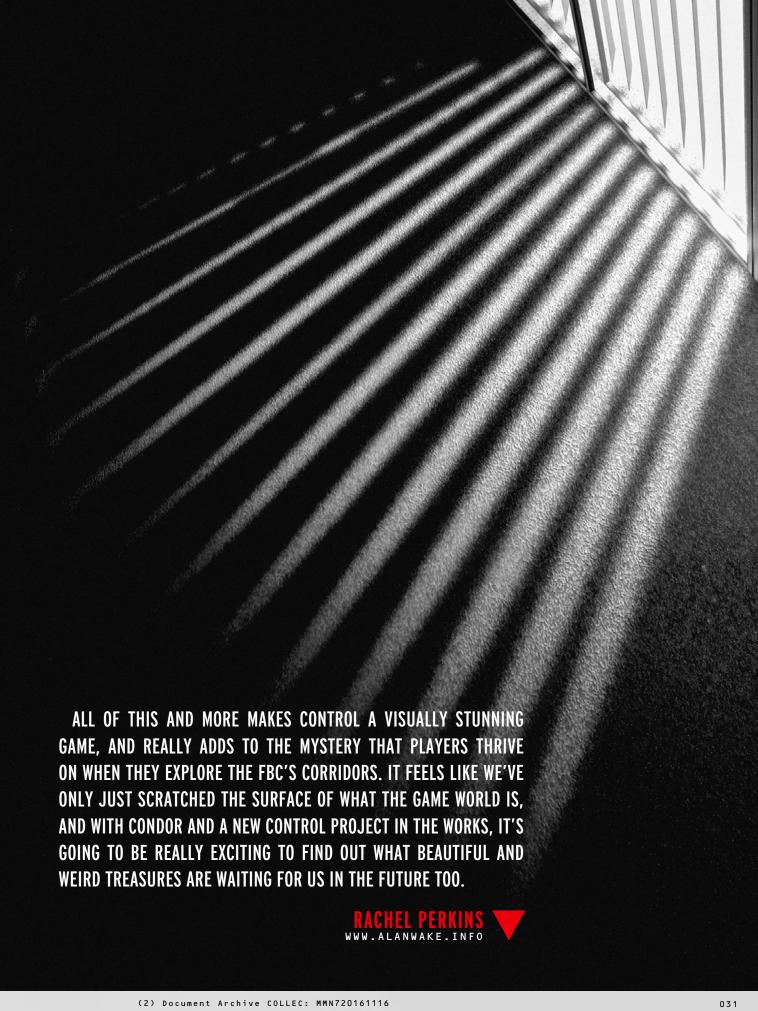
While the recognisable office building look can be used to ground the player at first, the more the story progress and Jesse's (and the player's) familiarisation with the Hiss grows, the more The Oldest House grows in personality too. It slowly reveals itself as an almost organic, TARDIS-like building, with its own logic and instincts, that has become naturally the home of the FBC. One of the biggest changes to the player's perspective comes in the Black Rock Quarry with an infinite starry sky above, unhindered by light pollution. The building suddenly becomes a pocket universe.

Light, and sometimes the lack of it, plays a major part in creating these awe-inspiring scenes, whether it's the starry sky, the red warning of the Hiss' corruption, or even just the limited use of it around the FBC corridors, giving away the general shape of the corridor while creating a sense of foreboding. Minimal lighting along a darkened corridor acts similar to Alan Wake's street lamps, guiding the way and providing rest. But they also are used to highlight potential dangers such as Former's spotlightlike eye or Objects Of Power, creating a more cautious atmosphere. Minimal lighting is used to great effect in the DLC pack, AWE, particularly when The Third Thing is around, creating a situation where the player almost only sees him in silhouette or as brief movement. The effect is incredibly haunting, particularly in enclosed locations where you must break through the walls to escape.

In contrast to The Oldest House and tough brutalist architecture is the Astral Plane. The location is brightly lit,

making it almost impossible to see beyond the confines of the path that the Board has planned out. The black and gold rock feels luxurious and almost alien, particularly in the empty space. The enemies that emerge are equally mysterious, often stone humanoids that stand in as moving target practice, and absent of any distinguishable features. They add to the constructed playground feel of the area and pose further questions about the Board's control.





Artistic Bureau of The Captured Collective, Europe Confidential (2) Document Archive COLLEC: MMN720161

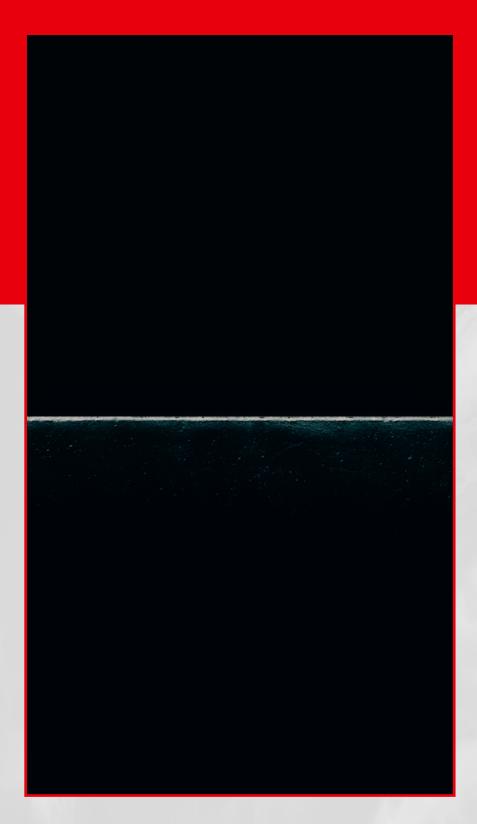


MEET THE WINE RS

Commented by Elmeri Raitanen Lead VFX Artist at Remedy Entertainement



SECOND RUNNER-UP



While skimming through all the entries to the competition, I noticed I always stopped on this image for a long time. To me, it somehow perfectly represents some of the bold, artistic choices we had to make while working on Control.

Sometimes it's better to show restraint and leave things out. It takes guts to proceed with a very simplistic but well-executed idea specifically when it's about something as subjective as "art".

Thank you for submitting this entry to the contest.

@_VIRTUALTOURISM



FIRST RUNNER-UP

This entry was one of my absolute favourite ones.

It's weird and mundane at the same time, and the setup – while it's essentially quite simple – leads to a mind-bending result. Immediately after seeing this shot, I had to jump into the Investigations Sector and find out "how the trick was done".

A very strong original idea, and great use of photomode controls!

@BARRYPAUS1



WINNER

Official Art and Making of CONTROL book

@MINOZUM

Picking *one clear winner* from the numerous gorgeous screenshots we received was tricky, but to me, this candidate embodies "virtual photography" the best.

We are very proud of the real-time ray tracing features in Control, and this shot uses the reflection from the glass in Jesse's portrait in a clever way. It's exciting to think we can now approach cinematography in cut-scenes this way, so thank you for inspiring us!

The framing of the shot is very well thought-out, and – while I don't know if it was deliberate or a happy accident – without knocking down Jesse's picture from the wall first, you can't recreate this composition.

Enabling depth of field with the photomode feature adds a nice finishing touch to the piece, making sure the viewer's eye is drawn to Jesse's gaze first, and from there into the peculiar things happening in the reflection.



I want to thank everyone at Remedy Entertainment and The Captured Collective involved in this project for two things specifically – open- mindedness and trust.

I'd like to thank Maggie for her wonderful work on all the design for this project. It was a delight to cooperate on it with her, ideas back and forth for the ultimate perfect creation. She went above and beyond to capture the essence of Control and successfully pulled it off to encapsulate the Control aura.

I want to thank Juha and Vida for every second of time they carved out of their busy days to respond to all our messages and for every tiny bit of the manufacture and resource they provided us with.

I also want to thank Sergey for answering our questions on the photo mode and Elmeri for being part of the judging process. Their involvement showed us how important the hobby we love is for the developers that provided the tools for it and it makes me super the possibly is even more in store regarding Virtual Photography from Remedy.

All ideas, be they as weird as possible, were welcomed with open arms by all of those involved. It was overall a mentality of "sounds great, go head, can't wait to see it". This feeling of nothing holding us back pushed us to create something really

It is of course a little bit scary for any fan to get in contact with the people that are making the things they love. The trust in our ideas that came back from Remedy gave us the freedom to be crazy and weird and we will never forget that.

This cooperation was a wonderful experience that enabled me to be very creative with a franchise that has been a big source of inspiration for me over the past years.

The news of a multiplayer game in the Control universe has me on the edge of my seat every time I think of it. I cannot wait for all the future and I promise my source of weird ideas has by far not run out yet.



SHOT BY THE AMAZING DR. LAMA
PROBABLY WEIRDER THAN USUAL..
- BERLIN, DE

