

ANIMEX

16-22 May 2022



Programme

Week at a glance

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm	Animex AVFX Middlesbrough Town Hall	Animex AVFX Middlesbrough Town Hall	Animex Pro Talks Middlesbrough Town Hall	Animex Game Middlesbrough Town Hall	Animex Game Middlesbrough Town Hall
			Animex Pro Workshops Teesside University Campus		
From 1.30pm			ExpoTees The Curve		
Evening	AVFX Lounge The Hub, Students' Union from 7.30pm	Fringe Event: Animex Exhibition Base Camp Exchange House TS1 1DB from 7.30pm	Fringe Event: Animex GameBridge The Hub, Students' Union from 6.30pm	Fringe Events: Double Eleven Networking Event Boho One, Bridge St W, TS2 1AE 5.00pm – 7.30pm	
				Players' Lounge The Hub, Students' Union from 7.30pm	

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Welcome to Animex 2022

We're back! After two years of running Animex as an online event we are so pleased to be back in person. Now in our 24th year, Animex at Middlesbrough Town Hall once again brings some of the most amazing people from across games, animation and visual effects to Middlesbrough.

We have an amazing line-up of events for you this year, including an exhibition of the fantastic work of Tina Nawrocki. If I had to choose, one of my personal favourites will be Tim Dawson and Wren Brier from Witch Beam Games talking about their work on Unpacking, which was my all-time favourite game over lockdown and helped keep me from going stir crazy.

We really hope you enjoy Animex 2022. Please do tag us on social media, #animexfestival2022.

Tim Brunton
Festival Project Manager

A message from our Dean

On behalf of the Animex Team, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to all our sponsors and invited speakers who have kindly given their time and energy in support of Animex 2022. We're overjoyed to be able to welcome everyone back to an in-person event after two years away. The success of Animex has always been a result of the hard work and dedication of the many colleagues and supporters, both externally and here in the School of Computing, Engineering & Digital Technologies at Teesside University, who together make Animex the unique-world class experience it has become.

I am very grateful to all of you who have contributed this year and as always am extremely proud to be part of Animex. I hope that you enjoy your time at our event and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible, and welcoming you back to our Animex festival in 2023.

Professor Chrisina Jayne,
Dean, School of Computing,
Engineering & Digital Technologies

Animex AVFX



Welcome to the 24th Animex AVFX, a packed two-day programme of talks.

Monday 16 May

8.30am	Registration , Middlesbrough Town Hall, Foyer	2.30pm	Break
9.50am	Welcome Craig Gaskell, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise & Business Engagement) Chris Wyatt, AVFX Co-ordinator,	3.00pm	The making of the Sniper Elite 5 cinematic trailer Hugo Guerra – Hugo's Workshop In this presentation, Director and VFX Supervisor Hugo Guerra will go behind the scenes on how Rebellion Film Studios created a full CG cinematic for the game Sniper Elite 5. We'll discuss the trailer's concept and creative vision, showcase the MoCap shoot, and stunt performance, and go over the lighting and rendering pipelines. We'll also talk, about the compositing and grading and go deeper into colour pipelines, calibration setups, video reference monitors, advanced grading techniques, grain and lens pipelines and finishing tweaks.
10.00am	The Art of Creative Collaboration Joanna Quinn and Les Mills – Beryl Productions International Ltd. A presentation by Joanna Quinn and Les Mills who will talk in detail about their long collaboration in the production of very successful animated films and TV commercials. They focus mainly on their latest short film production Affairs of the Art, which has achieved widespread success winning over 30 international prizes culminating in both Oscar and BAFTA nominations for best animated short film in 2022.	4.00pm	The Art of the Walk Cycle; The Walk is the Whole Story Tina Nawrocki, 2D Animator and Illustrator Tina Nawrocki is a 2D animator with 16 years' experience working in video games, movies and TV. She is best known for her work on the video game Cuphead and has a near obsessive love for the art of 2D animation walk cycle. Her talk showcases her own experience with character walks, from video games, through to movies and tv. It explores iconic animated walks of the past and deconstructs famous animators' approaches to creating great character walks. Finally, Tina breaks down her personal step-by-step approach to creating a dynamic and meaningful character walk. Viewers will walk away with a greater appreciation of the exciting storytelling opportunities of something as simple as the way your character struts across screen.
11.00am	UnReal Expectations: A Journey from Real Life, to Render, to RealTime Render Taylor Moll, DNEG Animation The epic adventure of a female artist navigating the visual effects and animation industries. Follow her creative and educational journey and learn how everyday experiences and day-to-day interactions can prepare you for the ultimate paradigm shift.	5.00pm	Close
12.00pm	Lunch	7.30pm - 10.30pm	AVFX Lounge A lively networking event for audience and speakers The Hub, Students' Union.
1.30pm	3D Animation Workflow on a Series Production Bianca Iancu, Bomper Studios An exploration of the pipeline on a standard 3D children's television production from an animation perspective, including some pitfalls to avoid, a few tips on how to enter the industry and what we look for in a showreel.		

Tuesday 17 May

9.00am	Registration & Portfolio Reviews For unregistered attendees only Middlesbrough Town Hall, Foyer.	3.00pm	Exploring Animation Styles – From Sonic to Optimus Prime Marion Strunck, The Mill Join Marion Strunck from The Mill giving a little analysis about the various animation styles and processes found in advertising, showcasing a commercial for <i>Sonic The Hedgehog 2</i> and Direct Line's latest collaboration featuring Optimus Prime.
10.00am	The VFX Secrets of Dumbledore Christian Manz, Framestore From the groundbreaking days of Harry Potter to the cutting edge artistry of Fantastic Beasts films, the Wizarding World has helped drive the VFX industry forward. Hear Framestore's Creative Director, Film discuss his incredible career in VFX and how it has intersected with the Wizarding World - most recently serving as overall supervisor on <i>Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets Of Dumbledore</i> .	4.00pm	Industrial Light & Magic: The Art of FX Azhu Mohamed and Louise Aubertin – Industrial Light & Magic Industrial Light & Magic's FX artists Azhu and Louise talk about the art of FX, how they work and what it means to be an FX artist at Industrial Light & Magic. They will also answer questions about their role and how you can make your showreel look ready for when you apply for jobs in the industry.
11.00am	Untold Studios Presents the Super Bowl Hit Frito-Lay 'Push It' Suvi Jokiniemi and Carlo Carfora, Untold Studios Join Untold Studios' VFX Lead Suvi Jokiniemi and Lighting Supervisor Carlo Carfora for a behind the scenes look at how the BAFTA and Emmy nominated team made the Super Bowl hit spot Push It. 45 artists from around the globe teamed together to create seven photoreal creatures at record speed. The chorus of singing and break-dancing creatures include a sloth, fox, croc, bear, and deer along with a bird voiced by Megan Thee Stallion and a herd of head bobbing buffalo.	5.00pm	Close
12.00pm	Lunch and Portfolio Reviews	7.30pm	Animex Exhibition Opening Base Camp Featuring the work of Tina Nawrocki, come and join us for the opening event of Animex Exhibition.
1.30pm	Directing as a New Mum Alexandra Davy, Blue Zoo A walkthrough of being a first-time director, first time mum, and full-time storyboard artist all wrapped up in a neat little package.		
2.30pm	Break and Portfolio Reviews		

Animex Portfolio Reviews

Animex is delighted to offer a free portfolio review to our ticket holders. We have invited a number of Teesside University graduates who have made it into industry, working at studios such as Amy Hartley, to come along and offer 1-2-1 feedback and advice on your portfolio and how to make the break into industry.

Sessions are tailored to animation, concept art, games art, games design and VFX. These sessions are free to ticket holders only and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis as numbers. Reviews will be taking place in Middlesbrough Town Hall throughout the week during breaks between the talks, see the schedule for further details.



Animex Pro Talks

Middlesbrough Town Hall

The first in-person Animex Pro brings you amazing talks and workshops presented by professionals for you to be able to grow your own professional skillset.

Wednesday 18 May

9.00am Registration For unregistered attendees only - Middlesbrough Town Hall Foyer	12.00pm Lunch
9.55am Welcome Ant Cain, Pro Co-ordinator	1.30pm Practical tools to implement in production to maintain team creativity and health Pete Bottomley, White Paper Games Peter breaks down production techniques that White Paper Games have implemented over the past ten years whilst shipping their original IP titles. We dig into team structure, communication, reflections, pipelines and processes that can be applied across a range of real-time industries with the aim of maintaining the balance between creativity and our teams mental and physical health.
10.05am Developing Company Culture Phil Attfield, NextGen Skills Academy Amy Smith, Framestore Skills shortages are reported at all levels of creative careers in games, animation and VFX studios. This session includes case studies and expert observations on how businesses can develop a skills learning culture and the intersection of skills with developing a diverse and inclusive workforce, while addressing skills issues.	2.30pm Break
11.00am Developing Video Games: The Perfect Mix of Tech and Art Liz Beer, Ubisoft Reflections Lucía Vázquez Vaquero & Aleksandra Stasiak, Ubisoft Leamington Main Hall We briefly cover all the aspects technical art can cover, with a deeper dive into UI, animation, rigging and art optimisation.	3.00pm Sifu: Road to 60 FPS Lea Bruder, SloClap How SloClap approach high quality stylized art with high performance on consoles with a relatively small team.
11.00am UX-pected Me to Talk about UI: Prioritising the Players' Perspective Throughout your Game Chloe Patricia Hodgson, Ubisoft Reflections The Crypt We briefly cover all the aspects technical art can cover, with a deeper dive into UI, animation, rigging and art optimisation.	4.00pm Pre-recorded with live Q&A From Miniatures to 3D Game Assets – How We Translate Games Workshop Miniatures to Workable and Authentic 3D Characters Naomi Biro – Creative Assembly Naomi discusses the flow of moving from examples of miniatures to making the concepts as well as creating 3D assets for game.
	5.00pm Close
	7.30pm - Game Bridge
	10.30pm The Hub, Student's Union, Teesside University

Pre-recorded On demand

Join us for three amazing on-demand talks delivered by members of Hong Kong Baptist University to discuss the advancements in technology and business!

Chris Lee – Noiseless Design

Chris will be speaking about virtual humans in the Hong Kong financial industry, the first of its kind!

Ralph Poon – XDCG

Ralph will be speaking about the new trends in virtual influencers and his recent virtual human projects including 'Konni Violet' & 'Hazel_atoa'.

Eddy Hui – Hong Kong Designers Association

Eddy would like to share some of the animations in Hong Kong, which focus on social and educational issues and how he collaborates with different talents from different industries.

Animex Pro Workshops



Wednesday 18 May

Teesside University

Put together by professionals, for professionals, our Animex Pro Workshops will deepen your existing knowledge. Free to those with an Animex Pro Pass.

Drawing for 2D Animation – Beef Up That Posing!

Tina Nawrocki, 2D Animator & Illustrator

10.00am - 1.00pm & 2.00pm – 5.00pm | Two sessions (half day)

Europa Building, OL3

This course is designed specifically for animators/artists looking to improve their drawings skills to create solid, appealing, and interesting key poses for animation/illustration.

This course breaks down the basic principles of Life Drawing. The focus is on the analysis of life models' poses, in view of applying that knowledge to create believable key drawings for animation.

Accessibility Resources for Games and How to Apply Them

Chris Goodyear, Founder, Many Cats Studios CIC

11.00am - 12.00pm and 3.00pm - 4.00pm

Stephenson Building, IC1.01B

Get thinking about accessibility with practical experience on why your game and company needs to do it. Chris provides resources to give you tools to understand accessibility in development further.

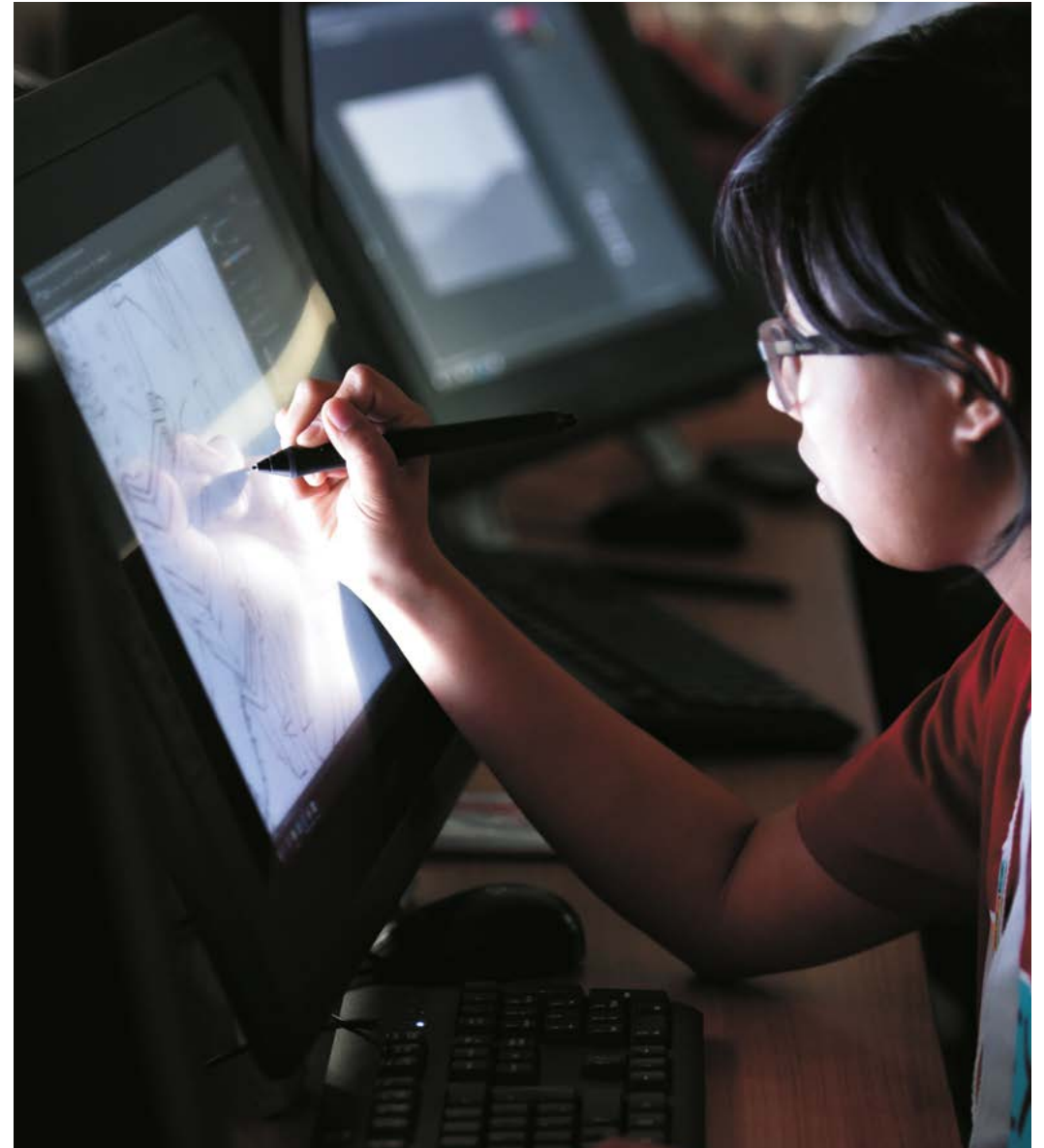
Substance Painter for Character Surfacing on Animation

Jorge Martin Iglesias

1.00pm - 2.00pm, pre-recorded

Europa Building, OL8

A quick view of how to properly organise and build a file that can be reused on animation projects where we have to do a lot of characters with more or less the same look.



Animex Game



The 24th Animex Game promises two days of jam-packed talks from some of the biggest studios and games.

Thursday 19 May

9.00am	Registration & Portfolio Reviews Middlesbrough Town Hall Foyer For unregistered attendees only.	12.45pm	Lunch and Portfolio Reviews
9.55am	Welcome Matty McGrory, Game Co-ordinator	1.30pm	Narrative Design in The Dark Pictures Anthology Tom Heaton – Supermassive Games Exploring the process around narrative design in The Dark Pictures Anthology.
10.05am	The Differences Between Cinematic and Gameplay Animation Chloe Bonnet and Sophie Shepherd – Creative Assembly Chloe Bonnet and Sophie Shepherd showcase what the differences are between their disciplines. They compare their experiences working at Creative Assembly, they'll outline the areas where both specialties meet and where they diverge. A talk for animation students interested in understanding game development specialisms.	2.30pm	Break and Portfolio Reviews
11.00am	Making Mexico: How Playground Games Re-Created the Vibrant, Diverse Open-World Mexico in Forza Horizon 5. Gareth Harwood – Playground Games Ltd. See behind the scenes in how Playground Games re-created the vibrant, diverse open-world of Mexico in Forza Horizon 5. Learn about the creation of individual needles on the desert cactus, to the sprawling historic cities, the challenges of building dense lush jungle and vast volcano topped vistas and how the endless, fun driving experience culminates to create the ultimate horizon adventure.	3.00pm	Your Accessibility Career: From Student to Full-Fledge Developer Chris Goodyear – Many Cats Studios CIC Accessibility is the new normal for development. A project can't afford to forget about it and be unsupportive to their players. But if you're a novice with accessibility, where do you start? Whether you are a student or developer, Chris helps you get started and help you learn about accessibility.
12.00pm	Game Development in the North East panel Join us for a fantastic panel of speakers from some amazing North East studios as they discuss game development and the state of play in the North East region of the UK. Hear from the following studios SockMonkey Studios, Double Eleven, Radical Forge, Ubisoft, Silent Games, with panel chair by Dom Shaw from Ukie and #RaiseTheGame.	4.00pm	Tiny Tina's Wonderlands: A Pipeline, Development and World Building Adventure Kate Pitstick – Gearbox Game development is challenging at the best of times. Figuring out how to work through both local and global disasters makes it more so. We'll take a look at how world building was done for Tiny Tina's Wonderlands and some of the tools used to remotely develop Gearbox's newest IP.
		5.00pm	Close
		5.00pm - 7.30pm	AVFX Lounge Join Double Eleven at their Middlesbrough studio for food, drinks, and networking as part of the Animex fringe.
		5.00pm - 7.30pm	Players' Lounge Join us for an exciting networking event showcasing work from local studios.

Friday 20 May

9.00am	Registration, Middlesbrough Town Hall Foyer For unregistered attendees only.	3.00pm	A Lot to Unpack: The Tools and Pipelines of Unpacking Wren Brier and Tim Dawson – Witch Beam Games Unpacking may have won players over with its simplicity, but there's actually a lot going on under the hood. Join developers Wren Brier and Tim Dawson on a tour of the many tools and processes that brought to life a game that features eight time periods, 35 rooms, 1000+ unique items and 14,000 foley sounds. In a game where small details count, being able to easily iterate is crucial. This behind the scenes look covers how the game was made and many lessons learned along the way.
10.00am	Sifu Combat Animation Kevin Roger and Maxime Blondeel – SloClap Finding the right game feel, while staying true to martial arts.	4.00pm	Creating a Nightmare in Half-Life: Alyx Christine Phelan – Valve Join Valve animator Christine Phelan for a presentation about the development of Half-Life: Alyx and the importance of playtesting when creating a full-length game built from the ground up for virtual reality. She discusses the evolution of Jeff, a new half-life creature designed for VR gameplay, and the need to ensure that player intention, interpretation, and expectations are captured when creating virtual worlds.
11.00am	How Impactful UI Can Transform Your Game Edd Coates – Freelance UI/UX Designer and Digital Artist UI (User Interface) Design is one of the most important, yet misunderstood artforms in game development. Many studios still haven't fully realised its transformative potential in their games. From the modest minimalism in Breath of the Wild to the comic-book constructivism of Sonic Forces, great UI not only makes navigating the game fun, but it also defines its visual identity and branding. Join Game UI Database founder Edd Coates as he explores the principles of impactful game UI, as well as some tips and tricks that you can use to create a unique and memorable experience for your players.	5.00pm	Close
12.00pm	Lunch		
1.30pm	Kung-Fu and Speedpainting Sifu's Art Direction and World Building Approach Paul-Emile Boucher and Marwan Ghandri – SloClap A talk about Kung-fu cinema, painterly aesthetic, and how these inspirations impacted production through world structure, graphic style and lighting.		
2.30pm	Break		

Animex Fringe Events



Animex Exhibition

Base Camp, Tuesday 17 May 7.30pm



Animex Exhibition provides a chance for festival goers to view the work of Tina Nawrocki, a 2D animator and illustrator with over 16 years' experience working in the games, television and film industries.

Tina designed and animated the bosses for *Sugarland Shimmy* and various platforming stages. After *Cuphead's* release, Tina worked for two years on Studio MDHR's new project, *DLC: Delicious Last Course*. Since leaving MDHR in 2020, Tina had the pleasure of animating on the Netflix Series *Green Eggs and Ham* and the feature film *Space Jam: A New Legacy* as well as providing original animation for Drake's new music video *Knife Talk*.

She is displaying work from *Cuphead*, *Jasper J. Pumpkinhead*, *Lunafon: Tales of the Moon Oak* and more. Join us at Base Camp for its grand opening.



Real Good

Game Bridge

The Hub, Students' Union, Teesside University

Wednesday 18 May 6.00pm - late

Game Bridge is a free networking event hosted in Middlesbrough throughout the year. It's an opportunity for you to meet independent developers, company representatives, freelancers and contractors, educators, students, graduates and others involved with the games industry.

Play locally developed games, have a drink and chat with other game makers.





**EXPO
TEES** 2022

ExpoTees2022

18 May
Athena Building,
Teesside University

The poster features a red background with white text. At the top right is a logo for 'EXPO TEES 2022'. Below it, the event title 'ExpoTees2022' is written in a large, bold, white font. Underneath the title, the date '18 May' and the location 'Athena Building, Teesside University' are listed. At the bottom, there are four red rectangular panels with white dashed lines forming a series of arches.

ExpoTees displays a selection of some of the finest examples of work produced by our final year students, representing the full spectrum of subjects taught within the School of Computing, Engineering & Digital Technologies – animation and visual effects, games design and concept art, web and computer science, engineering and programming.

Find out more:
tees.ac.uk/expotees



Double Eleven Networking Event

Boho One, Bridge St W, TS2 1AE

19 May, 5.00pm – 7.30pm

Join Double Eleven at their Middlesbrough studio for food, drinks and networking as part of the Animex fringe.

The team from Double Eleven are on hand to offer advice to help you upskill and boost your confidence by asking questions directly to industry professionals.

Double Eleven is also offering a limited number of portfolio review slots and a 1:1 feedback session. To secure your slot visit the Double Eleven recruitment stand at the Animex fringe on Wednesday 18 May.

An Animex ticket is required to attend.



Speakers



Kate Pitstick

Lead World Builder, Gearbox Studio

Kate has worked for over ten years in the industry, starting right before graduating from the Savannah College of Art and Design. She first began as a level designer, working on coop and multiplayer games at Hi-Rez Studios on titles such as Global Agenda, Tribes: Ascend, SMITE, as well as several unannounced/unshipped titles.

In 2015, she left to begin work at Motiga to help develop the MOBA hybrid Gigantic, until the studio's closure a year later. Since then, she's been at Gearbox Software and has shifted her focus from broader level design responsibilities to be more focused on mission design and scripting.



Christine Phelan

Animator, Valve

Christine has enjoyed over 15 years as an animator in the entertainment industry, creating compelling character performances for video games such as Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Brütal Legend, and Dota 2, as well as virtual reality experiences, short films, and advertising campaigns. Her most recent work was bringing nightmares to life in virtual reality as a creature animator and gameplay designer for Valve's Half-Life: Alyx.

When not working with fictional creatures, Christine studies wildlife as a field ecologist. She has contributed to projects mitigating human-elephant conflict, investigating the ecological impacts of wolf recolonization on predator-prey interactions, the effects of climate change on snow-wildlife interactions and monitoring wolverines in the North Cascades mountains. Find out more about her work and other projects christinephelan.com



Tim Dawson

Technical Director, Witch Beam Games

Tim is one of the founders of indie studio Witch Beam and technical director of their most recent title, Unpacking. He is a multi-disciplined game developer who spent his first nine years in games as an animator at Australian studios including Ratbag, Team Bondi, Pandemic and Sega Studios Australia. After going independent, Tim was responsible for art, animation, programming and creative direction of Witch Beam's first title, Assault Android Cactus.



Wren Brier

Creative Director, Witch Beam Games

Wren is the creative director of the award-winning indie game Unpacking. She's been working in the games industry for nine years, starting at Halfbrick and later working as a freelance artist before joining Witch Beam Games. In addition to her game development roles, Wren has spoken on panels and served as a judge at Australian games industry events. She runs Women in Games Brisbane, mentored at The Working Lunch and ran pixel art workshops at Woodford Folk Festival. Wren curated the pixel art exhibit Power to the Pixel with the Brisbane Powerhouse and has given talks at GCAP and Freeplay's Parallels Showcase, among others.



Tina Nawrocki

2D Animator

Tina is a 2D animator and illustrator with over 16 years' experience of working in the gaming industry, television and film. Tina joined Studio MDHR in 2015 to work on Cuphead as a concept artist and 2D animator. She designed and animated the bosses for Sugarland Shimmy and various platforming stages. After Cuphead's release, Tina worked for two years on Studio MDHR's new project, DLC: Delicious Last Course. Since leaving MDHR in 2020, Tina had the pleasure of animating on the Netflix Series Green Eggs and Ham and the feature film Space Jam: A New Legacy as well as providing original animation for Drake's new music video Knife Talk.



Pete Bottomley

Co-founder and Studio Head, White Paper Games

Pete is the co-founder and game director at White Paper Games. White Paper Games released its first title, Ether One, on March 25 2014 to critical and popular acclaim. Ether One was nominated for a Develop award for Use of Narrative and was also a finalist at Indiecade 2014. They shipped their second title, The Occupation, on March 5 2019, which gained the studio a position in Creative England's Top 50 Most Innovative Companies across all digital media along with a nomination for Best Use of Engine in 2019 at Develop. The Occupation then went on to win the Best Performance award at Indiecade 2019. White Paper Games are now working on their next title, soon to be announced.

Peter is also a co-founder and studio head at White Paper Games. Founded in 2012, White Paper Games has released three titles to date across PC and console, including Ether One, The Occupation and Conway: Disappearance at Dahlia View. White Paper Games is a multi-award-winning studio in areas such as narrative and voice acting along with their use of Unreal Engine work. They were also named as one of the top 50 most innovative companies across all media by Creative England. Peter directs the game design, cinematography and production of the games in development at White Paper along with handling the day-to-day running of operations at the studio. He also hosts the Unreal Engine Manchester Meetup and the Realtime Roots podcast where he interviews creators from real-time industries about their pipelines and processes. One day a week, Peter also teaches game design to third year and MA students on the University of Central Lancashire games course.



Suvi Jokeniemi

VFX Lead, Untold Studios

Suvi is a VFX lead at Untold Studios with extensive experience working on high-profile projects for commercials as well as film and episodic content. Since joining Untold Studios, Suvi has played a key role on large scale commercial projects such as Avanti West Coast Feel Good Travel and the hit Super Bowl ad, Push It, for Frito-Lay. She has also worked on the eagerly anticipated Netflix series adaptation of The Sandman. Prior to joining Untold Studios, Suvi has worked on a plethora of renowned films such as Aladdin, Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, Solo: A Star Wars Story and Star Trek: Beyond

Speakers



Carlo Carfora

Lighting Supervisor, Untold Studios

Carlo is a Lighting Supervisor at Untold Studios. He strives for innovation and beautiful imagery by pushing the boundaries of technology. Carlo has over ten years' experience and his expertise ranges across multiple areas of VFX, which makes him an exceptional, multifaceted supervisor. Throughout his career, Carlo has played pivotal roles in projects for clients such as Amazon, Electronic Arts, Nike, Three, O2, Nissan, Chemical Brothers and Hyundai. He also played a key role in Netflix's Cowboy Bebop.

He is passionate about prioritising creativity and helping artists in his team remain focused on a project's overall tone and appeal. His drive has allowed the studio to take on the latest technological developments in the area of lighting and rendering for commercials, episodic and film.



Alexandra Davy

Director/Storyboard Artist, Blue Zoo

Alex is a storyboard artist for animation, born in London and living in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Currently directing Blue Zoo's upcoming short film Rust (working title) and also storyboarding on a new children's series. Alex started out as a generalist before specialising in storyboarding. Before that she was a jeweller, and also performed in the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympics (which has nothing to do with animation, but it'll be a good opener in the pub later).



Phil Attfield

Co-Founder, NextGen Skills Academy

Phil is a co-founder of NextGen Skills Academy and a VFX professional with nearly 40 years' experience as a technician, editor, vfx artist, studio proprietor and skills champion. A nominee for BAFTA TV and Emmy awards he has more than 20 feature film credits including the Academy Award winning The King's Speech in 2010. Phil uses his experience and network to develop courses, qualifications, apprenticeship standards and progression routes for talent, driving the NexGen aim of creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce for the games, animation and VFX industries.



Chris Goodyear

Founder, Many Cats Studios

Chris is a deaf developer and freelance producer who started his own company, Many Cats Studios, to help bridge the gap between disabled and neurodiverse people and the games industry. He is passionate about highlighting the amazing skills and talents of disabled and neurodiverse people within the industry and ensuring everyone has a platform for their voice.



Naomi Biro

Lead Character Artist, Creative Assembly

Naomi is a lead character artist on Total War: WARHAMMER, the multi-award-winning franchise from Creative Assembly. She specialises in characters and creatures, hard-surface weapons and war machines. During her career in games, Naomi has worked with a variety of pipelines and techniques such as creating game-ready characters by transferring high poly sculpts to low poly textured meshes in an efficient and timely manner.



Bianca Iancu

Animation Lead, Bomper Studio

Bianca is a 3D animator of short films, commercials, games, VR experiences, kid's television and everything in between. She is the London-based animation lead at Bomper Studio, having also previously worked on a variety of projects at studios like Coatsink and Blue Zoo since graduating from Teesside University in 2014. She currently specialises in leading animation teams to create heartfelt, playful character animation that connects with a wide range of audiences. She is passionate about adapting visual storytelling across different mediums and is continuously inspired by how art and technology play a part in shaping our view of the world.



Amy Smith

Head of Talent, Framestore

Amy has been working in talent-related roles within the visual effects industry across both the UK and Canada for many years. In each role she has had responsibility for working with schools, colleges and universities to provide careers guidance and support educators with content. She is a non-executive director of Access: VFX, an industry organisation working to improve the diversity of the visual effects industry. She is also part of the steering group of the Next Gen Skills Academy who, with industry, launched a Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills and she took responsibility for working with NextGen to develop, launch and promote VFX apprenticeships. Recently Amy has been completed work as chair of the T-Level panel for media, broadcast and production. The panel was responsible for providing an employer perspective on the post-16 education landscape in the UK.



Tom Heaton

Game Director, Supermassive Games

Tom began his journey in games making maps and mods for Quake III Arena. His first job was a designer on Quake III Revolution for the PS2. He was a lead designer and producer at Pocket Studios, Climax and Player One, working on many licensed titles including Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring and Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. At Eidos he worked as an external designer in their casual games division working on a wide range of titles and platforms for diverse audiences. He joined Supermassive Games in 2009 to lead that team that made Tumble for the PS3 Move. He was design director on Until Dawn and game director on Tumble VR.



Sophie Shepherd

Animator, Creative Assembly

Sophie has been at Creative Assembly for almost three years and is currently working on the Warhammer gameplay animation team, having just had the latest title Total War: Warhammer III released. Prior to working at Creative Assembly, she was a student at Falmouth University studying game development – animation for three years.

Speakers



Chloe Bonnet

Lead Cinematics Animator, Creative Assembly

Chloe has been in the industry for eight years. At Creative Assembly she is the Lead Cinematic Animator on Total War working on anything produced in-engine for Total War: Warhammer III. During her time at the studio, she's contributed to every Total War release since Total War: Rome II (Total War: Attila, Total War: Arena, Total War: Warhammer I, Total War: Warhammer II, Total War Saga: Thrones of Britannia, Total War: Three Kingdoms, Total War Saga: Troy, Total War: Warhammer III), that's more than 40 trailers and even more in-game cinematic content. Prior to her debut at Creative Assembly as a Trainee Cinematic Animator, she was an animation student in France and has a background in fine arts and traditional and 3D animation.



Christian Manz

VFX Supervisor and Creative Director, Framestore

Christian's 20+ year career has seen him work on a range of iconic projects and gather four BAFTA nominations and an Academy Award nomination along the way.

He began his Framestore career in 1997, having trained as an illustrator. Work for a number of groundbreaking episodic projects soon followed, and from there he went on to work on a raft of high-profile features, from the Oscar-winning Golden Compass to 47 Ronin and Dracula Untold.

Bringing the magic of JK Rowling's wizarding world to life has played a big part in Christian's career. He received BAFTA and Oscar nods for bringing Kreacher and Dobby to life for 2010's Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, and he was brought onto Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them from early pre-production as overall VFX supervisor, alongside Tim Burke. This partnership continued with the film's sequel, Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald, and both films earned him additional BAFTA nominations. Most recently he brought his trademark flair to Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore, working as the film's sole Overall VFX Supervisor.



Paul-Emile Boucher

Art Director, SloClap

After studying CG direction and animation, Paul-Emile Boucher began working in the video game industry as VFX & Environment Artist at Ubisoft Paris, on games of the Ghost Recon, Just Dance and Watch Dogs series.

He joined Sloclap a few weeks after the studio was founded, and became the Art Director on Absolver: Downfall and the recently released Sifu.



Marwan Ghandri

Associate Lead Artist, SloClap

Marwan started at Sloclap in 2016 as an Environment Artist Intern. Having just graduated from LISAA, a French art school in three years, he firstly worked on the Absolver game for almost two years. Then, the game launched an extension one year after which he worked for a year as an Environment and Lighting Artist. He is now working mainly on the lighting of the game Sifu while still doing environment production.

Even if it is not his core job, he likes what it talks about technical-art stuff and loves to put them into action in the project.



Kevin Roger

Animation Director, SloClap

Kevin is a French Sloclap employee for six years. During that time, he has shipped Absolver as an animator and Sifu as an Animation Director and Lead.



Maxime Blondeel

Gameplay Animator, SloClap

Maxime Blondeel is a gameplay animator at Sloclap. He has also worked in the film industry on live-action and animated films. Maxime is always looking for a new challenge and has found that video games are full of them.



Lea Bruder

Graphics Engineer, SloClap

Lea has been in the game industry since 2016, she worked in both tiny three people indie studios, and has shipped a few AAA games at Virtuos. She now works at Sloclap and has since 2019. She has been engine pr programmer, a technical artist and is now a graphics engineer.



Taylor Moll

VFX Supervisor, DNEG Animation

Taylor is a VFX Supervisor at DNEG's Feature Animation division with over a decade of experience in surfacing and texturing.

She recently completed work as VFX Supervisor on Mr. Spam Gets A New Hat, an animated short from Academy Award-winning director William Joyce. She also recently supervised DNEG's surfacing work on Disney's upcoming animated feature film, Ron's Gone Wrong. Prior to joining DNEG in 2015, Taylor worked at DreamWorks Animation as a Lead and Senior Surfacing Artist, where she honed her skills on titles such as Disney's Home, Rise of The Guardians, Kung Fu Panda 2 and Shrek Forever After among others. Her earlier projects include George Miller's critically acclaimed Happy Feet and Stuart Little 3: Call of the Wild.

Taylor studied at The University of Victoria and holds a degree from The Art Institute of Vancouver. Her first major project was on the Flash-animated comic series Broken Saints, which won multiple awards, including from Telefilm Canada and Sundance Film Festival, and has gone on to garner a cult following.



Les Mills

Director/Producer/Writer, Beryl Productions International Ltd

Les studied fine art at Cardiff Art College, Goldsmiths in London and did a fine art and history MA at Rutgers University in the USA. Les has taught extensively, initially teaching art and design but gradually become more interested in documentary filmmaking and animation, which resulted in him teaching animation at Middlesex University, Independent Film Production at Cardiff University and Course Director of the Film School at the University of Wales, Newport. His first creative collaboration with Joanna was on her Graduation film Girls Night Out and since then the two have worked very closely together forming their company Beryl Productions International in 1988. He wrote and produced the next Beryl film Body Beautiful and produced Wife of Bath one of the Canterbury Tales series, which won a Bafta, three Emmys and received an Oscar nomination. He went on to write and produce two more Beryl films Dreams and Desires – Family Ties and Affairs of the Art which have won 80 international awards between them including two BAFTA nominations and an Oscar nomination. Les won the Writers Award at the 2022 British Animation Awards.

Speakers



Joanna Quinn

Director, Beryl Productions International Ltd

Joanna discovered animation at Middlesex University London while studying for a BA degree in graphic design. Her graduation film *Girls Night Out*, a brilliantly simple and humorous riposte to machismo and a celebration of uninhibited female sexuality, introduced audiences to the character of Beryl and kick-started Joanna's animation career by winning three major awards at Annecy. The uniquely memorable character of Beryl became the focus for three more films *Body Beautiful*, *Dreams and Desires - Family Ties* and most recently *Affairs of the Art*. The politics of gender and oppression together with Joanna's obsessive fascination with exploring the eccentricities of the human body, in particular the female form, became the central themes of her work. Her masterpiece is *Britannia* a savage indictment of British imperialism. Joanna's films have won many international awards, including Baftas, Emmys and three Oscar nominations. Joanna is a committed educator and is an Honorary Fellow at the Royal College of Art, London and University of Wales and Honorary Doctor at Middlesex University, London and the University of Wolverhampton.



Azhul Mohamed

Senior Effects TD, Industrial Light & Magic

Azhul is a Senior Effects TD with over ten years of experience working in visual effects, making magic, explosions and other fun things on the big screen. He has been working at Industrial Light & Magic for the large part of the last six years on a variety of projects like the *Rise of Skywalker*, *Jurassic Park Dominion*, *Mandalorian* and *Eternals* amongst others.



Louise Aubertin

Effects TD, Industrial Light & Magic

Louise is an Effects TD with five years of experience working in visual effects. Her work brought her to work from small to big companies. And to work on a great range of effects from magic to destruction, enhancing day-to-day phenomenon for the big screen. She has worked at Industrial Light & Magic on and off for about three years on projects like *Avengers Endgame*, *Star wars* or even the next *Jurassic World*.



Marion Strunck

Animation Lead, The Mill

Marion grew up in a small village in northern Germany and developed a passion for art when she was young, drawing on the walls of her parents' living room. She kept drawing through high school to the dismay of her teachers and earned her bachelor's degree in character animation from the Animation Workshop in Viborg, Denmark. She took an internship at Framestore in London and continued to work and grow as a 3D Animator in the VFX industry working on several films like *Paddington*, *Mowgli* and *Detective Pikachu* and is now working on various advertisements at The Mill. In her free time you can find her drawing, travelling, acting, flying drones, and dreaming up ideas.



Gareth Harwood

Technical Art Director, Playground Games

Gareth Harwood is the Technical Art Director for Playground Games, a UK based Xbox Games Studio. Gareth joined Playground Games in 2012 and has worked on all the *Forza Horizon* games, including the latest BAFTA award winning *Forza Horizon 4*.

Gareth initially joined as a Technical Artist, before being promoted to lead the Technical Art team on *Horizon*. Now as a Technical Art Director he is responsible for two teams working on two exciting new projects.

Gareth holds a BA in digital art, and has been making AAA games for over ten years.

Outside of work Gareth is currently playing *Apex Legends* and *Risk of Rain 2*, enjoying quick pick-up-and-play gameplay. When not gaming Gareth enjoys boardgames and playing with his two sons.



Chloe Patricia Hodgson

UX Designer, Ubisoft Reflections

Chloe is a UX designer, illustrator, and computer scientist from West Cumbria, currently working at Ubisoft Reflections. After studying at the University of York, where she carried out research on the design of educational games for autistic children, Chloe began a career in UX design to combine her artistic and engineering experience. This all stems from Chloe's love of storytelling, and she aims to make the unique experiences we have through video games more immersive, emotional, and accessible. Additionally, she performs stand-up comedy, boulders, and spends a lot of time sitting in bookshop cafes.



Liz Beer

Technical Artist, Ubisoft Reflections

Liz has worked at Tt Games for one year on *LEGO Jurassic World*, *LEGO Dimensions* and *LEGO Marvel's Superheroes* as a QA tester. She has been at Ubisoft Reflections for six years, working on *The Division DLC*, *The Division 2* and year 1 content, moving from a Development Tester to Content Validator to Technical Art.



Jorge Martín

Senior Character Surfacing Artist – Skydance Animation

Jorge is a spanish experienced CG artist, he's worked mainly as a texture and lighting artist. He has a degree in fine arts that helps to develop his work in these positions and make his job there professional and creative.

He has worked on *Ilion Animation*, *Axis Animation*, *Illusorium Studios* and now at *Skydance Animation* on different positions that involved look development. He has been a surfacing artist for the most part of his career but has also worked for some time as a lighting artist for project like *WonderPark*, and some game cinematics for *League of Legends* and *Destiny*.

Jorge is also currently a Lighting professor at U´tad University.



Lucía Vázquez Vaquero

Technical Artist (UI) – Ubisoft Leamington

Lucía has been a Technical Artist at Ubisoft Leamington for a little over a year and a half. She specialises in UI implementation, a career she transitioned into after studying a degree in mechanical engineering (Swansea University) and a master's of Art in product and furniture design (Nottingham Trent University). Her multidisciplinary education has made her an enthusiast of all things art, design and technology. Prior to joining Ubisoft she worked as a Design Engineer for 3M's Health Care division and attended the RCN United World College in Norway, where she moved to from her hometown in Spain.



Aleksandra Stasiak

Junior Technical Artist – Ubisoft Leamington

Aleksandra Stasiak is a technical artist specialising in Rigging. She graduated from Buckinghamshire New University and pursued a career in game industry working on mobile and AAA projects. In her free time she shares her knowledge among students as an Associate Lecturer at BNU. Her main objective is to show everyone that rigging is not as scary as they may think.

Speakers



Edd Coates

UI/UX Designer and Digital Artist

Edd is an experienced UI/UX Designer and Digital Artist with seven years of freelance experience in the games industry. Skilled in the Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash/Animate with AS3), as well as HTML, CSS, PHP, jQuery and MySQL.

He is also creator of the Game UI Database, which was featured on Mashable, GamesIndustry.biz, Rock Paper Shotgun, and in Edge Magazine. Winner of Best Tools Provider at the Pocket Gamer Mobile Game Awards 2021.



Christopher Lee

Founder/Director – Noiseless Design

Christopher is a communication designer and graduated from Hong Kong Baptist University in 2005 and Ogilvy Beijing in 2008. Chris started his own studio, Noiseless Design, in 2011 with a strong focus on the branded experience. His works are awarded internationally such as in Germany, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China.



Ralph Poon

Founder– XDCG

Ralph Poon is the founder of XDCG, a virtual human company in Taiwan. He is also a VFX professional with vast experience in Asian film and commercial projects including Sun Pictures's 'Enthiran' and Walt Disney Pictures's 'The Magic Gourd'.

Ralph will be speaking about the new trends in virtual influencers and his recent virtual human projects including 'Konni Violet' & 'Hazel_atoa'.



Eddy Hui

CEO – Hong Kong Designers Association

Eddy is one of the early adopters of animation, experience design, moving images and design education in Hong Kong, he has been working in art, design and media industry for more than 25 years and his artworks have been exhibited in different countries. He served in different local and global design companies and focused on the integration of new media into corporate identity. He also contributed as speaker, mentor, judge and fundraiser to flourish the industry.



Dom Shaw

EDI Coordinator – Ukie

Dom Shaw is the first Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Coordinator for the UK video games and interactive entertainment trade association, Ukie, who manages their flagship diversity initiative – the #RaiseTheGame pledge, alongside supporting efforts towards other activities and initiatives Ukie provides like the Video Games Ambassadors programme with Into Games. Dom is also an ambassador for the UK's leading autism research charity, Autistica, who strive to give autistic people the opportunity to live long, happy, healthy lives. The charity has a keen interest in the games industry due to the correlation between video games, emerging opportunities and neurodiverse individuals.



Bruce Slater

CEO/Creative Director – Radical Forge

Creative Director of Radical Forge, the studio has worked on Gang Beasts, Minecraft Dungeons, Rust Console, Sea of Thieves and their own IP game Bright Paw. Bruce started out as a Freelance Technical artists, He still spends most of his time creating Shaders, VFX and Tools.



Kimberley Turner

CFO – Double Eleven

Kimberley qualified as a chartered accountant in 2008, putting theory into practice in one of the North East's biggest PLC's. Our first non-development hire, she directs all things Finance and Commercial.

She believes client relationships and reputation are key to our success and that customer service is critical to long lasting partnerships negotiating fair and rewarding terms for all parties. A true partnership from day one is always top of her agenda.



Sally Blake

CEO – Silent Games

Sally Blake is the CEO of Silent Games and has worked in both AAA and indie game development for almost 10 years. She has either won or been shortlisted for multiple industry awards for developing strong, happy and motivated teams, as well as her work around diversity and inclusion. Born in Bradford and now living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the UK, she champions the game industry in the North of England and founded Women Making Games (WOMG) to support women in the local area. Sally has shipped numerous titles including: "Just Dance", "Watch Dogs", "Tom Clancy's The Division 1&2", "Descenders", "Yes, Your Grace", "Hypnospace Outlaw", "Britannia VR" and more.



Hugo Guerra

Director and VFX Supervisor – Hugo's Desk

Hugo Guerra is an award-winning Director and VFX Supervisor. After finishing his Fine Arts degree, he worked in Portugal and Sweden before moving to the UK. In 2010 he joined The Mill London as a VFX Sup and as Head of the Nuke Department where he worked with clients like Audi, Adidas, Nike, IKEA, Panasonic, Discovery Channel, Sony, Activision, Ubisoft, etc. In 2014 Hugo joined Fire Without Smoke as a Director and Visual Effects Supervisor, working on trailers for games studios like CCP, Ubisoft, Deep Silver, Square Enix, Sony, Warhammer, etc. Most recently Hugo worked as a VFX Sup for Sony Playstation and worked as a Film Director for Rebellion Studios. He is also very active as a lecturer of VFX, making keynotes in festivals all over the world in partnership with BenQ, Foundry, ActionVFX and track. Hugo is also a content creator on YouTube with his channel Hugo's Desk and he is the co-host of the VFX Notes Podcast with Ian Failes from Before & Afters.

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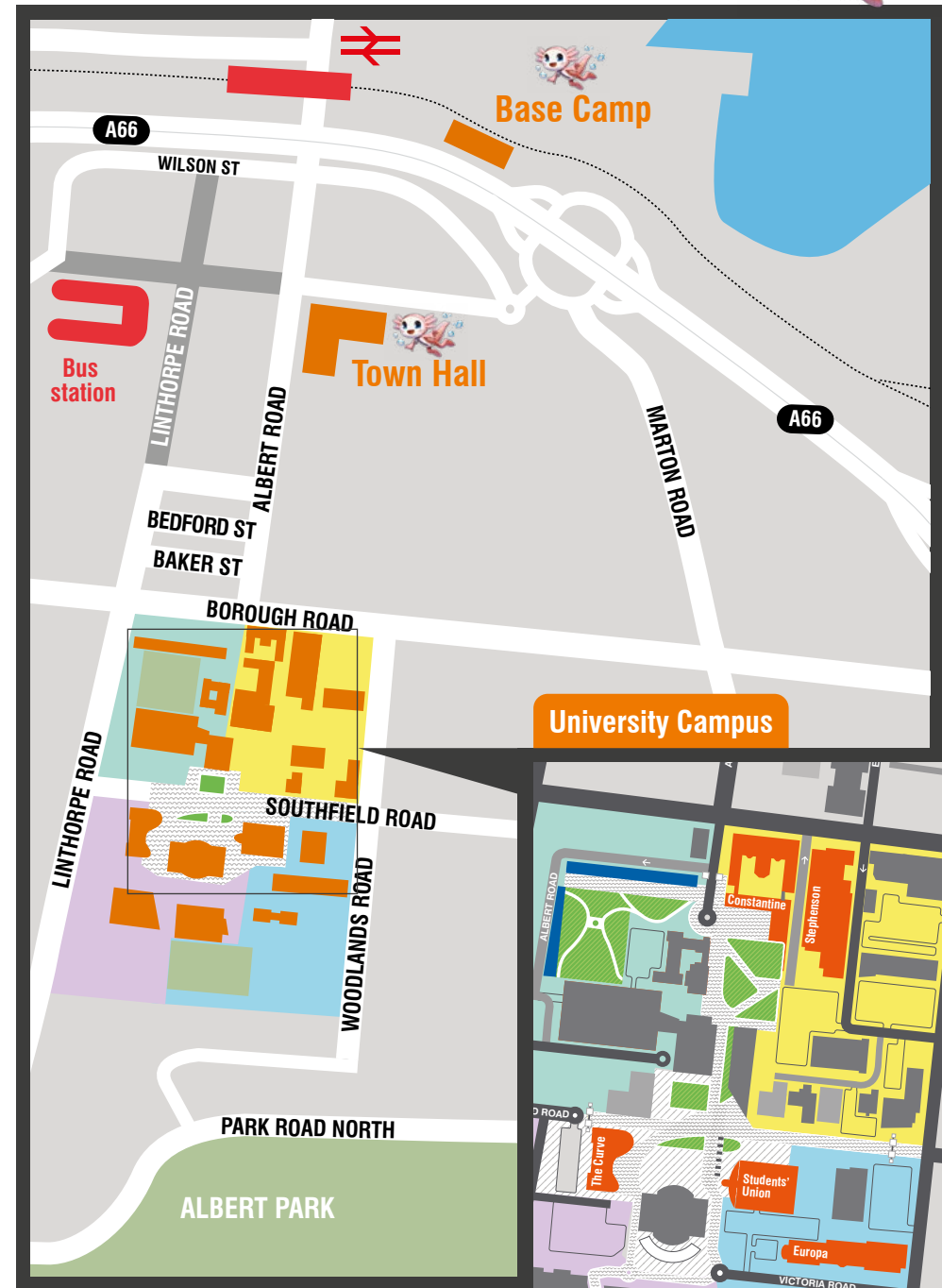
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