

Nick Vollmer

Lead Gameplay Designer | Character, Combat, & Systems | Technical Designer

nickbvollmer@gmail.com · (817) 219-1998

Portfolio: nickbvollmer.com · LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/nickvollmer · Danville, CA

Professional Summary

Award-winning Game Design Manager with 10 years of experience leading multidisciplinary teams of 15+ to deliver critically acclaimed AAA projects that pushed the boundaries of gameplay innovation and studio capability. Proven success driving the creative and technical direction of industry-defining gameplay experiences. Expert hands-on designer in systems, combat, and player experience design, with a strong record of shaping gameplay pillars including player abilities, enemy AI, progression systems, stealth, and boss encounters. Recognized for blending creative vision and innovation with high-quality technical execution through mastery of Unreal Engine and in-editor tool creation, driving studio-wide adoption of new tools and workflows.

Core Skills

Gameplay Leadership & Craft

Core Gameplay Direction | Lead Gameplay Design | Combat Design | Systems Design | Player Abilities & Experience | Encounter Design | Enemy AI | Boss Design | Progression Systems | Rapid Prototyping | Playtesting & Iteration | Cross-Discipline Leadership | Mentorship

Technical Design & Implementation

Unreal Engine 5 | Blueprint Scripting (Expert) | In-Engine Implementation & Tuning | Technical Design | In-Editor Tool Development | Pipeline / Workflow Automation | Gameplay Scripting | AI / Companion Systems | C++ Collaboration | Debugging & Optimization | Perforce | Jira | Confluence | AI Tools (Meta AI, ChatGPT, Claude)

Professional Experience

Lead Designer | Meta - Sanzaru Games

Mar 2021 – Mar 2026

Projects: *Asgard's Wrath 2*, Unannounced Project (Major IP)

- **Led 15+ designers across gameplay, combat, and player experience while remaining hands-on in Unreal**, shaping core gameplay across combat, encounters, characters, progression, enemy AI, stealth, vehicles, and side-quest content across two AAA projects
- **Designed and led the implementation of player abilities, combat systems, bosses, enemy AI, and companion AI** achieving depth, balance, and high player engagement. AW2 shipped 4 heroes, 90+ enemies, 10 major bosses, and 5 AI companions.
- **Built advanced in-editor tools and validation systems in Unreal Engine 5 Blueprints** that reduced iteration time, accelerated debugging, and enhanced collaboration between Design and Engineering—later adopted studio-wide as shared infrastructure across disciplines.
- **Drove rapid prototyping initiatives** across narrative, dialogue, combat, and player ability systems with teams ranging from 1-2 individuals to a 30+ member demo to validate mechanics, guide production priorities, and accelerate development.
- **Built and led strong design teams** while raising craft standards through careful hiring, targeted feedback, individualized growth trajectories, and a focus on intra and inter team dynamics.
- **Conducted studio-wide training on new tools and workflows**, improving productivity and design iteration speed.
- **Instituted new cross-functional communication and production standards** to enhance collaboration and delivery between Design, Engineering, Animation, Art, Audio, VFX, and Narrative teams, significantly reducing production delays.
- **Partnered with engineers on complex C++ integrations** to ensure technical feasibility and optimization, improving long-term system stability for all aspects of both projects.
- **Launched the critically acclaimed *Asgard's Wrath 2* for Meta Quest 3**, a 100+-hour AAA VR action RPG widely regarded as one of the best VR games ever made, awarded a *10/10* by IGN, and recipient of multiple GOTY awards.

Senior Designer | Sanzaru Games

Feb 2020 – Mar 2021

Projects: *Asgard's Wrath*

- **Owned end-to-end design and in-engine implementation of 5 critical-path levels**, integrating combat, puzzles, encounters, and narrative beats across 3 early levels and tutorials.
- **Led design and delivery of 2 major boss encounters**, defining combat mechanics, AI behaviors, and player interactions in close partnership with Engineering, Art, Audio, and VFX.

- **Mentored junior designers and coordinated cross-disciplinary feature teams** to elevate and align combat, puzzle, and narrative systems under unified gameplay goals, greatly increasing team productivity.
- **Drove the design and delivery of major gameplay systems and content**, collaborating with Engineering, Art, Audio, and VFX to deliver polished combat, encounters, AI companion gameplay, puzzles, and narrative-driven player experiences.
- **Improved design documentation standards and production workflows**, enhancing cross-team clarity and iteration efficiency. Personally generated over 50 key documents and drove their development.
- **Delivered tightly integrated combat, puzzle, and narrative experiences** that contributed directly to *Asgard's Wrath's* 88/100 *Metacritic* rating and widespread critical acclaim.

Designer, Sanzaru Games

May 2017 – Feb 2020

Projects: Marvel Powers United VR

- **Owned all boss and enemy design for *Marvel Powers United VR***, stepping in to rebuild the entire combat suite from concept to completion in six months after prior development was scrapped—delivered 100% of combat content under deadline, driving project turnaround success.
- **Collaborated closely with Engineering, Animation, and VFX teams** to bring complex enemy behaviors and combat systems to life, achieving strong visual clarity, gameplay readability, and technical stability.
- **Created comprehensive design documentation** detailing enemy behaviors, combat flow, and AI logic to support rapid iteration and cross-team alignment.
- **Earned studio-wide recognition** for revitalizing a stalled production effort and successfully delivering all combat content under aggressive timelines, which directly contributed to promotion into senior and lead design roles on subsequent projects.

Early Career & Academic Projects

Contract Designer, Playchemy

Feb 2017 – May 2017

Projects: Multiple Unannounced Mobile Projects

Supported design and narrative development on three unannounced mobile titles under NDA. Authored scripts for a licensed TV IP and implemented prototype gameplay systems in Unity. Recognized by the Studio Head for delivery quality and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Level & Systems Designer, Stronghold

Jan 2016 – May 2017

Projects: Unannounced Twin-Stick Shooter RPG

Defined gameplay direction and built core systems (Dialog, Quest, Enemy Spawn) for an unannounced twin-stick shooter RPG. Authored the initial GDD and designed a city environment using streaming tech for seamless exploration. Selected as a founding member by faculty leadership for excellence in design and collaboration.

Project Lead, Academy of Art University Collaboration

Aug 2015 – Mar 2017

Projects: Psycho Princess

Directed a 40+ person team in creating *Psycho Princess*, an action/adventure tower-defense title showcased at GDC. Oversaw project vision, scheduling, and design of combat, progression, and enemy systems to deliver 3 fully-functional levels and a boss encounter.

Education

Student Representative, MFA Game Development Program, Academy of Art University

Sept 2016 – May 2017

Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Game Development | Academy of Art University, San Francisco, CA

Sept 2014 – May 2017

Bachelor of Arts (BA), English, Cum Laude, Dean's Honor List | Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX

Sept 2004 – May 2007

Awards & Recognition

Asgard's Wrath 2 (Meta – Sanzaru Games)

AIXR Awards (2024): XR Game of the Year | DICE Awards (2024): Immersive Reality Game of the Year | Road to VR (2023): Quest Game of the Year | NYX Game Awards (Season 1 2024): 29 total wins, including Gold for Best Audio Design, Best Innovation, Art Direction, Game Design & Narrative | The Webby Awards (2024): Best Narrative Experience, Game Design & Metaverse | NAVGTR Awards (2024): Best Direction in VR | IGN (2023): 10/10 Editor's Choice

Asgard's Wrath (Sanzaru Games)

D.I.C.E. Awards (2020): Immersive Reality Technical Achievement | NAVGTR Awards (2020): Nominee for Control Design (VR) & Sound Mixing | People's Choice (2019): Best PC Exclusive | Road to VR (2019): Game of the Year | IGN (2019): Best VR Game