In the Spotlight

Stefan Misirdzhiev

Meet concept artist, **Stefan Misirdzhiev.**
Stefan currently works for a digital marketing company, but his passion for art is what drives him to continue creating stunning scenes day after day. Whether he's creating a sci-fi scene, environment, or character, Stefan challenges himself to put his best foot forward with each new concept.

Learn what Stefan has to say on his experience with VUE, and how it has helped him in his creative process, his advice for others, and his tips for learning a new software.

e-on software: What is your background?

Stefan Misirdzhiev: I'm currently working as an e-marketing manager for a digital marketing company. While digital art and art in general has been a hobby of mine for the better part of two decades, the current industry environment has cemented it as a hobby, for the time being.

I enjoy the challenge and variety that comes with every single project, no matter how small. I primarily do work as a concept artist, so one moment I can be designing a mech, a space dragon, or making an alien environment.

I start my day pretty much by picking an idea out of a hat and beginning to develop it through research, references, planning, and finally, execution. Some days I might do 10 small concepts as a start, and another I might dedicate to rendering and editing a final product.
Ideally, in the future, it would be nice to actually be a part of the creative industry! I did my master's in games art and design, and the environment was amazing – mostly because for once there were people with whom I could discuss geeky, and more technical aspects that tend to be really boring subjects for the other people.

Stefan Misirdzhiev, 2019

e: What is your experience with VUE?

SM: I've used VUE for my projects for about 4 years now. It has, in some cases, made for an unparalleled level of visual quality and speed. The right backgrounds and HDRI images have always been hard to find, which is where VUE, with its amazing sky and lighting systems, has been a huge help! Whether a scene is entirely rendered in VUE, or I'm just using a panoramic render of a scene set-up, VUE has almost entirely replaced the "hunt-down-the-right-HDR-background-for-this-scene" part of my workflow with a fast, flexible alternative.

For environment work, I will often use World Machine and Zbrush for large scale features that need a specific look to them. More recently, I've started using Unreal Engine 4 for rendering scenes – which is where importing panoramas from VUE has been a huge help.

e: Do you have any advice to share?

SM: That's a tough one for me to say – I guess one piece of advice is to be brave and to just jump into it! At first, a lot of technical terms and jargon might get in the way of making a nice-looking mountain or valley, but a week or two after some failed attempts, you'll see great improvements! Also, YouTube is your best friend.
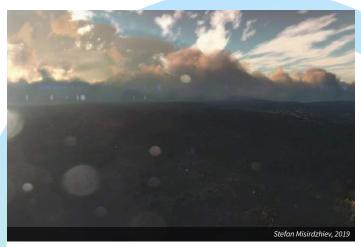
YouTube is my main learning center. There are two main parts that I've found helpful when seeking knowledge there. The first is to find tutorials on the software that you plan to use and once you've figured out how to control the camera and which way is up, move on to the next category – skill and methodology - focused tutorials. These are where you'll find how to add things like erosion and displacement textures, and how to populate scenes with plants and other objects. Finally, you'll start forming questions and ideas on your own and seeking out official software forums are where you'll find the answers to the most obscure questions.

I get a ton of inspiration from film and games, but books are an especially great source of inspiration. They offer creative ideas via words alone – much like a studio or a concept brief, in which based upon these, you would have to develop a visual.

e: Would you recommend VUE to other artists, and why?

SM: Yes – I find its ease of use and ability to generate great HDRIs for lighting and backgrounds to be invaluable. In an environment where rendering engines, modeling, and texturing software trends constantly shift, I've found that there is always a place for VUE.

Stefan Misirdzhiev, 2019

Thanks, Stefan! Make sure to check out his portfolio at:
https://www.artstation.com/chesher

e-on
software