

Sam Merrick - Lead 3D Generalist/Technical Artist

Personal Summary

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 **Portfolio:** <https://sammerrick.co.uk/> |  **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sam-merrick-art/>

Professional Summary

Lead 3D Generalist/Technical Artist with 14+ years of experience. Recognised as a dependable core team member who combines creative vision, technical expertise, and calm, thoughtful leadership to keep teams motivated and projects thriving.

Key Skills & Tools

- 3D Modeling & Texturing: Hard-surface & organic modeling, Sub-D workflow, UV unwrapping, PBR workflows
- Rigging & Animation: Both body and facial rigging for characters, rigging and animation for environments and props.
- C# programming knowledge for automation, tool creation and game prototyping.
- Engines: Unreal Engine 4/5, Unity, Playcanvas, proprietary engines
- Software: Maya, Blender, 3DS Max, ZBrush, Substance Painter/Designer, Photoshop, Marmoset
- Workflow: Modular asset creation, real-time optimization, LODs, lighting, shaders, VFX
- Other: Agile/scrum pipelines, version control (Perforce, Git), mentoring/junior support
- Leads teams with a trust-based approach, providing clear structure and direction through Jira and Figma. Ensures every team member has the context, references, and freedom to take ownership of their work while staying supported and unblocked throughout production.

Notable Projects

Limitless VR Experience – Disney+ Series Feature - Professional

Role: Lead 3D Generalist Artist / Technical Artist | Unity | VR

Led a multidisciplinary team through full visual and design development of a high-rise VR experience featured in *Limitless*, a Disney+ documentary series starring Chris Hemsworth. Led team workflows, asset creation, and reviews to deliver a compelling simulation designed to help Chris Hemsworth confront his fear of heights; walking a virtual plank atop an Australian skyscraper.

- **Built and lit the urban environment** in Unity, optimized for real-time VR performance.
- Focused on **high-impact visual storytelling** to support the segment's psychological and emotional goals.
- Assets were **optimized for immersion, realism, and hardware efficiency**.
- The experience was **prominently featured in the show** and used as a narrative stepping stone to the real-life challenge.

Rider's Up – Kentucky Derby Museum Arcade Installation - Professional

Role: Lead 3D Generalist Artist / Technical Artist | Unity | Full Production Ownership

Directed full art production and team leadership for *Rider's Up*, a multiplayer arcade horse racing game installed at the Kentucky Derby Museum in Louisville, KY.

- **Managed both the internal and an external art team**, set briefs, reviewed deliverables, and ensured visual consistency and technical quality.
- **Created art assets** including modular environments, stylized jockeys and horses, racing tracks, and crowd props.
- **Rigged and skinned** horse and character models for animation and runtime use in Unity.
- Built custom **VFX and shaders**, handled lighting and performance optimization for arcade-grade hardware.
- Built **tools in C# to assist** in automated prefab configuration, random jockey and horse skin customisation, integrating weather system VFX and shaders into the game, and more.
- Designed **five distinct historical eras** of Churchill Downs racetrack, requiring deep visual research to reflect real-world architecture and cultural shifts accurately.
- The game received **extensive media coverage** across U.S. news outlets and has become a **signature attraction** at the museum.

Award-Winning VR Musical Experience - Professional

Role: Lead 3D Generalist Artist / Technical Artist | VR |Unity

Key contributor to a stylized, narrative-driven VR musical experience that garnered multiple international film awards. **Collaborated closely with a core team** of artists and developers, with leadership in visual consistency, workflow coordination, and environment polish.

- Developed immersive, performance-optimized characters and stylised environments for VR format.
- Built **tools in C# to assist** in automated prefab configuration, **VFX** and custom **shaders** to boost visuals
- Project **received multiple international accolades, including:**
 -  *Best Musical Film* – Cannes World Film Festival 2023
 -  *Best 360 Film* – Cannes World Film Festival 2023
 -  *Barcelona Indie Awards 2025*, *Las Vegas Indie Film Festival 2024*, and others.

Red Bull Ampol Racing Team Simulator - Professional

Role: Lead 3D Generalist Artist / Technical Artist | Unity | Real-Time Simulation

Creative and technical lead on visual development, working closely with a small team to deliver a branded interactive simulator for the Red Bull Ampol Racing Team.

- **Directed the creation of stylized 3D likenesses of real Red Bull drivers**; rigged and animated characters for immersive scenes.
- Modeled and textured racetrack environments, vehicles, and branded assets for use in Unity.
- Delivered a premium racing experience where users drove alongside their favorite Red Bull team drivers.

✨ Weaponized Monster Truck Project – Personal

Semi-realistic/stylized 3D vehicle, modeled, textured, and rendered in Unity Engine. Inspired by games like *Twisted Metal* (989 Studios), *DiRT* (Codemasters) and *Grand Theft Auto* (Rockstar Games). Focused on hard-surface detailing, Sub-D modeling workflow, PBR workflow, and modular design for game-readiness. [\(As seen on portfolio.\)](#)

✨ Stylized Cube Character – Personal

Stylized cartoony cube character, modeled, textured, rigged and animated in Blender. Inspired by the character design in games like *Fall Guys* (Mediatonic / Epic Games) and *Gang Beasts* (Boneloaf). A personal study on soft / organic modeling, custom squish and stretch rigging and animation. [\(As seen on portfolio.\)](#)

✨ Realistic Human Face – Personal

Realistic game ready female human face, sculpted, textured, rigged and animated in Blender. Inspired by character design in games like *Horizon Zero Dawn* (Guerrilla Games). A personal study into realistic facial rigging and expressions using blendshapes / morph targets. [\(As seen on portfolio.\)](#)

✨ Sunset Boulevard Environment Design – Personal

Stylized music festival environment design, built, lighting, post processing and rendered in Unreal Engine 5. Inspired by environment design in games like *Cyberpunk 2077* (CD Projekt). A personal study into environment art, lighting, rendering, PBR workflow, and modular design for game-readiness. [\(As seen on portfolio.\)](#)

Professional Experience

Created By Catalyst - Lead 3D Generalist Artist / Technical Artist

📍 October 2020 - Present

Led 3D art production across immersive VR and real-time experiences using Unity and Unreal Engine.

Future Visual - Lead 3D Artist

📍 August 2017 - October 2020

Produced large-scale VR training environments and interactive simulations for enterprise clients.

Synertial Labs (Motion Capture Studio) - Lead 3D Artist & Technical Animator

📍 February 2015 - June 2017

Created real-time character rigs and animation pipelines for mocap data visualization and demos.

✳️ **Earlier Roles (2012–2015)** Worked on contract and freelance 3D artist roles including stylized mobile game assets for **Disney** (via Kerb), and character work at **Mediatonic**. Focus included environment art, animation, and Unity integration for games and prototypes.

Education & Training

BA (Hons) in Computer Games Technology - University of Portsmouth, UK

Graduated: 2010

Portfolio & References

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✉️ References available upon request