

JOLIE MENZEL

Narrative-Driven Design · Visual Storytelling · Creative Leadership

joliemenzel.com · linkedin.com/in/joliemenzel

Game designer with 15+ years making ambitious, narrative-rich games with creative teams of every size. Excels at building a shared language across disciplines, translating creative vision into something every team member can see, understand, and execute on.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

Double Fine Productions Senior Designer *Jan 2025 – Present*

Shipped: Kiln

- Progression design: Designed experience and in-game currency economies. Set playtime goals and tuned progression in response to live telemetry data.
- Owned design of the full first-time user experience (FTUE), including playtesting-driven iteration and telemetry analysis to hit target length and eliminate player blockers.
- UX design: Designed overall game flow and screen architecture; wireframed key screens and iterated with the UI team to ensure consistency across the product.
- Owned design and prototyping of new game modes and features for post-launch.

Probably Monsters Game Design Director *Mar 2024 – Dec 2024*

- Owned design vision for a single-player narrative title, including GDD authoring, workflow definition, and milestone quality bars.
- Scaled a 30+ person co-dev team from Prototype through First Playable by building delegation-friendly workflows, documentation, and pipelines.
- Directed feature strategy through competitive analysis and player research — clarifying where to innovate vs. standardize — and identified high-impact tooling improvements from hands-on implementation.

Night School Studio (Netflix Games) Senior Game Designer *Feb 2023 – Mar 2024*

- Prototyped and set core gameplay direction for a cloud/streaming title: designed cross-platform movement (mobile and console) tuned for high-latency environments.
- Established world metrics and layout standards used by Design and Art to build content consistently across the game.
- Ran decision-focused content reviews, reducing churn and clarifying trade-offs for leadership for more informed decision-making.

The Molasses Flood (CD PROJEKT) Lead Narrative Designer *Feb 2022 – Dec 2022*

- Narrative and mission design owner; partnered with tools and procedural generation team to reconcile authored storytelling with replayable systemic content.
- Ran a multi-day onsite writer's room at CD PROJEKT HQ to break the game story and unify Boston- and Warsaw-based narrative teams.
- Produced Witcher tone and brand guidelines in partnership with IP loremasters to define systemic narrative constraints and de-risk approvals.
- Authored missions in UE4 and a proprietary scripting language; built reusable templates to support future content scaling.

The Coalition (Xbox Game Studios) Lead Narrative Designer *Feb 2020 – Jan 2022*
Shipped: Gears 5: Hivebusters DLC · Live Ops Operations 3 – 8 · WWE collaboration

- Owned narrative and mission flow for Hivebusters (6-mission campaign); shipped 25+ playable Live Ops characters with complete dialogue sets on aggressive cadence, including a collaboration with WWE.
- Led a narrative team of 4 as primary cross-discipline liaison for Level, Combat, Multiplayer, Audio, and Localization; coordinated reviews with franchise leadership.
- Oversaw a multilingual narrative pipeline across 14 voiced languages.

Ubisoft Osaka Lead Designer *Jun 2018 – Dec 2019*

Shipped: Rocksmith+

- Led improvements to Dynamic Difficulty feature and designed a visible skills/curriculum map (RPG-style progression) to make mastery trackable and practice goals clear.
- Positioned the title for edtech adoption alongside consumer play by partnering with a music educator to build curriculum and assessment loops.
- Served as primary liaison between Ubisoft Osaka development and Ubisoft San Francisco stakeholders, driving alignment through structured reviews and onsite collaboration.

Ubisoft San Francisco Lead Narrative Designer *Feb 2015 – Jun 2018*

Shipped: South Park: The Fractured But Whole and 3x DLC

- Owned all mission and narrative design: defined mission flows and macro campaign progression, integrated South Park Studios' writing, and oversaw voiceover and localization pipelines.
- Managed 4 direct reports and ran a cross-discipline pod of 6; narrative/mission point of contact for 24 designers across San Francisco and Osaka.
- Designed a context-driven dialogue system for dynamic character banter resilient to heavy iteration; designed an Excel-driven bulk-edit pipeline for 60K+ voiced lines.

Telltale Games Cinematic Artist *Jun 2011 – Jan 2015*

Shipped: The Walking Dead S1 · The Wolf Among Us · Tales from the Borderlands

- Built cinematics in collaboration with designers and writers; authored camera language and greybox setups to keep interactive beats readable and stakeholder decisions fast.

SKILLS & TOOLS

Leadership: Vision setting · milestone definition and quality bars · roadmapping · co-dev/outsourcing direction · cross-discipline alignment · live ops · mentorship & team health
Design: Mission & level design · systems design · narrative systems · UX design · progression design · playtesting & telemetry iteration · cross-platform interaction · accessibility
Pipelines: Content pipelines for co-dev/outsourcing · VO & localization pipelines · design documentation · build review rituals
Tools: UE4 / UE5 · Perforce / Git · Jira / Confluence · Notion · Miro · Figma
Additional: Storyboarding · IP development & stewardship · Screenwriting · Editing · Public speaking

EDUCATION

Savannah College of Art and Design — B.F.A., Sequential Art
Minors in Conceptual Art for Games and Storyboarding