

Bill Trost

CREATIVE DIRECTOR · DESIGN DIRECTOR · DESIGN LEADER

San Diego, CA · Open to Relocation

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Creative Director and Design Director with nearly thirty years shipping games across AAA, indie, and mobile. Co-creator of EverQuest — one of the most influential online games ever made, still running 25 years later. Known for defining creative foundations from first principles, mentoring designers, and staying hands-on in engine across the full spectrum: from leading hundreds of people on genre-defining MMOs to solo indie projects and #1 selling apps.

EXPERIENCE

Director of Design

2023 – 2026

Intrepid Studios · San Diego, CA · Ashes of Creation (MMORPG, UE5, Early Access)

- Led design across systems, narrative, UX, and combat for a large-scale MMORPG developed under significant community scrutiny.
- Worked hands-on in UE5 — terrain, landscape, foliage, set dressing, and narrative flow — modeling the standard for designer ownership of the world.
- Established design tenets, review practices, and mentorship structures; authored onboarding and progression scaffolding to teach complex systems through play.

Creative Director & Founding Member

2016 – 2023

Amazon Games San Diego · San Diego, CA · New World and unannounced titles (UE4)

- Founding member — helped establish studio design culture, org structure, discipline boundaries, and creative standards; reviewed pitches, prototypes, and builds across multiple projects.
- Contributed to New World's transition from survival game to mainstream MMO: narrative direction, content systems, and building the narrative team.
- Led R&D into AI-generated voiceover pipelines for an unreleased MMO, evaluating generative VO for viability and production fit at scale.

Creative Lead & Founding Member

2007 – 2013

Trion Worlds San Diego · San Diego, CA · Defiance (PC / Xbox 360 / PS3 / Syfy TV)

- Originated the Defiance transmedia universe — world, factions, tone, and franchise identity — and led it through simultaneous launch across three platforms and a television series.
- Directed content and world production pipelines for real-time rendering across PC and console from pre-production through ship.
- Partnered with Syfy and NBCUniversal to align game and broadcast creative development around a shared franchise vision.

Co-Creator & Lead Designer

1996 – 2007

Sony Online Entertainment / Verant Interactive · San Diego, CA · EverQuest and multiple titles

- Co-created EverQuest — built the world of Norrath from scratch: lore, pantheon, faction system, starting cities, and the design principles that defined the genre.
- Hands-on in engine throughout: world geometry, NPC population, quest flow, and progression scaffolding; mentored designers across EverQuest II, Untold Legends (PSP, Greatest Hits), and multiple prototypes.
- Designed the faction and reputation system — EverQuest's most enduring design contribution, still running 25+ years later.

INDEPENDENT WORK

Folk Horror · UEFN / Fortnite · 2026

Direwood — under the pseudonym grimbrim

Solo-designed folk horror social experience in Unreal Editor for Fortnite.

Full GDD through shipped product: Verse scripting, NPC stalker behavior, ambient audio state machine, HUD, map layout.

Roguelike · Pico-8 · 2024

Pupper — under the pseudonym grimbrim

Complete roguelike designed and shipped solo in Pico-8. grimbrim.itch.io/pupper.

iOS · The Blimp Pilots · 2008 – 2015

Koi Pond, Distant Shore, Elephant Odyssey

Co-founded five-person indie studio. Koi Pond reached #1 paid app on the App Store in its first year. Distant Shore was an experimental anonymous social experience. Elephant Odyssey with the San Diego Zoo.

Roguelike RPG · PC · Early Access 2016

Hero's Song — PixelImage Games

Founding member. Open world roguelike fantasy RPG with Patrick Rothfuss. Studio became the seed of Amazon Games San Diego.

CORE STRENGTHS

Creative & Design Direction · Hands-On in UE4 / UE5 · Team Leadership & Mentorship · First-Principles Design · Franchise Vision & Stewardship · Systems & Progression Design · Narrative Direction · Live Service & MMO Development · Cross-Platform Pipelines · Transmedia IP Development · AI-Integrated Content Production · Pragmatic Execution

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Hall of Fame · EverQuest · GDCA 2011

Greatest Games of All Time · EverQuest · Gamespot 2004

Best of Show · Defiance · MMORPG.com 2011

Game of the Year · EverQuest · Gamespot 1999

Hot 100 Developer · Individual · Next Generation 2006

Top Selling iPhone App · Koi Pond · Apple 2008

Online GotY · EverQuest · AIAS 2000 & 2001

Greatest Hits · Untold Legends · SCEA 2006

Top 100 Companies to Watch · Blimp Pilots · Entrepreneur 2009