

MATTHEW MERINO

Level Designer | Unreal Engine 5 | Gameplay Spaces • Encounter Design • Technical Implementation

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Level Designer with professional AAA production experience on Dune: Awakening at Funcom. Specialized in immersive gameplay spaces, encounter design, player flow, and technical implementation in Unreal Engine 5. Experienced collaborating across design, art, and engineering teams to deliver shippable content for large-scale live-service productions.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

WDR Studios, LLC — Unreal Engine Generalist

Terrible Lizards | May 2026 – Present

- Working in multiple areas of development including level design, sound design, and environment art within Unreal Engine 5.
- Helping elevate the game's audio through the use of dynamic sound implementation (blueprints), sound asset creation, spatial audio tuning, and set piece sound designing.
- Helping with level design and environment art by refining player flow, tuning parkour gameplay sequences, and providing additional environmental storytelling.

Funcom, Inc. — Junior Level Designer

Dune: Awakening | Aug. 2024 – Oct. 2025

- Assisted with shipping Dune: Awakening and its first post-launch update for a title exceeding 1.5 million copies sold.
- Designed and iterated gameplay spaces including caves, NPC outposts, and dungeon content from blockout through final polish using Unreal Engine 5.
- Collaborated across design, art, and engineering teams to migrate 3 live dungeon experiences to a new instancing pipeline under a 2-week production deadline.
- Created and refined 8 enemy outpost POIs using AI patrol behaviors, encounter scripting, and environmental storytelling techniques.
- Improved exteriors and gameplay readability for 11 NPC bases while coordinating closely with environment artists across multiple time zones.
- Tuned encounter difficulty, enemy composition, loot balance, and player progression for PvE gameplay content.
- Delivered level pitches and gameplay markups communicating encounter flow, pacing, and player interaction goals.

Funcom, Inc. — Design Intern

Dune: Awakening | Jun. 2024 – Aug. 2024

- Rapidly iterated level blockouts into shippable gameplay spaces using modular kits and proprietary world-building tools.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to implement and refine gameplay spaces supporting open-world exploration and PvE encounters.
- Strengthened production pipeline knowledge including iteration workflows, feedback integration, and interdisciplinary communication.

Code Wiz Durham — Coding Coach

Jan. 2024 – Jun. 2024

- Taught students ages 7–17 game development concepts using Unreal Engine, Unity, Roblox Studio, Scratch, and Minecraft modding tools.
- Instructed students in Blueprint Visual Scripting, C#, and Python programming fundamentals.

Biomason — 3D Modeler / Material Artist

Jun. 2021 – Aug. 2021

- Created 3D models in Maya to visualize cementation processes at a micro scale.
- Developed physically based materials in Substance Painter using real-world reference imagery.
- Collaborated with a multidisciplinary team to deliver visualization assets aligned with client needs.

SKILLS & TOOLS

Level Design: Encounter Design, Player Flow & Pacing, Environmental Storytelling, Grayboxing, Modular Level Design, Open World Design, PvE Gameplay Spaces, Worldbuilding, Design Documentation

Technical: Unreal Engine 4/5, Blueprints, Gameplay Scripting, Perforce, GitHub, JIRA, Confluence, Miro, Visual Studio Code, Python, C#

Content Creation: Maya, Blender, Substance Painter, Lighting, Composition, Adobe Creative Suite

Certificates

Level Design Blockout Bootcamp (Action Adventure Edition)

Game Design Skills | February - May 2026

- Designed and iterated gameplay blockouts in Unreal Engine 5 using AAA level design workflows, from concept, documentation, and layout planning through playtesting and refinement.
- Developed engaging player experiences through encounter design, gameplay scripting, environmental storytelling, lighting, and atmospheric world-building.

EDUCATION

William Peace University

B.A. in Simulation and Game Design | 2018 – 2022

GPA: 3.8 | Honors Student

AWARDS & SPEAKING

- SGD Outstanding Graduate Award — William Peace University
- Gold Medal for “Remembering Hue” — Serious Play Conference 2022
- Speaker: “From Intern to Full-time at Funcom, Inc.” — High Point University (2025)
- Speaker: “From Passion to Career” — Sycamore Creek Elementary (2025)