

# RUSHES

magazine

How Lyn Paolo went from designing costume for the small screen to the gamer's screen.



Costume designer Lyn Paolo on how her talent for designing costume is now just as important for the virtual realm.

After over twenty years of creating distinctive wardrobes for popular television shows including *Scandal*, *Southland* and *ER* Lyn Paolo recently changed medium to design the costume for Rockstar Games' *Grand Theft Auto V*. Breaking records as the fastest-selling entertainment product in history, and winning Rockstar a BAFTA Fellowship back in March, it is unsurprising that the newest installment of *Grand Theft Auto V* is on the cutting edge of costume design in video games.

Video games companies are only recently hiring costume designers for their

characters' wardrobes, due to stunning improvement of game visuals. Lyn Paolo's first venture into designing for the gamer is for a crime-ridden, open world, fictional version of LA.

**For me the whole process of doing a video game as opposed to TV or film was absolutely intriguing.**

The process begins with concept boards and conceptual discussions, then we moved onto talking in a rough way about the population in the game (as there are so many characters who are not integral to the game but the world still has to be populated) then we moved onto the scanning and discussion of color, texture, and the inherent problems of the translation of the real clothing into a digital representation of fabric. The movement of the fabric can be tricky.

**I felt that the process was very similar in the early design phase**

You discuss the characters, look at design boards, discuss color and texture of fabrics, the thing that was tricky was not knowing who the pivotal characters were to be and not being aware of what the game really was. I had no idea what the game was going to be, so that was like working in the dark.

**We had long discussions about who (in the abstract) each person was to be**

Because of the security concerns of not leaking anything we had to talk about each character without me really knowing who they were going to be within the game which was difficult for me as I am used to being more involved in the character development.

**I did not have the same control**

Although it was fun, it was difficult for me to let go in the early stages of the game, especially as I feel now on looking back at the process that it would be a great idea to keep the Costume Designer around so that choices that are made with color etc. could be discussed at a later stage of the game evolution.

**I really do feel strongly that the Designer should be consulted throughout the game development**

It seems fairly obvious in many games that after the initial scanning process that there is no one who is handling the "look". I am certain that a lot of this

has to do with the issues of what the technology can do, but it would be so much more interesting and realistic I think if the designer could be involved throughout the process to help create a fashion or design and reality to the look that you may not find with some of the games that are available to the consumer at the moment.

**I find this whole area of entertainment fascinating**

I think it will evolve in ways that actually scare me. The fact that color and texture of clothing can be changed after the fact horrifies me slightly but I would love to learn more and to be on the cutting edge of this fabulous new medium. Who knows all TV shows could be basically created with this format in the future.