Lara Kehler

Senior Game Designer & Artist | Mobile, Web, & PC

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Overview

I'm inspired to develop games that create memorable experiences. I love working with people to solve problems, inspire creativity, and facilitate personal motivation and ownership in ways that improve team morale and overall product quality.

For the past 5 years I have been working as a puzzle and idle game designer on 5 unique titles in Unity and Flash. I have worked on 3 mobile puzzle games from pitch to launch as the lead designer & vision holder. As either a senior artist or design lead I have worked on 13 full game development cycles since 2006 for mobile, PC, Web/Social.

I design full game features, UI, FTUE tools and flow, story & dialogue, juicy player feedback, various supporting puzzle mechanics, player progression maps, puzzle levels, and full game economies based on target KPIs.

I have been working in the Free to Play space for over 6 years and am familiar with using data and analytics to help guide pragmatic design choices and improve retention & monetization. I design content creation processes & tools in order to create games that can be supported by live-ops teams.

Brief list of puzzle games I have designed and developed:
- A 3rd person action adventure puzzle game based on minesweeper with weapons, powerups and enemies.
- line drawing match 3 battle game
- collapse "match 2" saga game with 10 supporting mechanics, unique combo system and hundreds of supporting levels.
- Match 3 mechanics for a conveyor belt, candy matching game.

Shipped Game titles include:

Trailer Park Boys: Greasy Money - *East Side Games (Android, iOS): Liveops Senior Designer for Mini Events (24-48 hr events).*
Bud Farm: 420 - *East Side Games(Android, iOS): Senior Designer*
Dragon Up: Match 2 Hatch - *East Side Games (Android): Lead designer, Vision Holder*
Mighty Bots - *East Side Games (Android): Project Lead, Designer & UI artist*
Triple Town - Spryfox (Facebook, G+, Steam, Android, iOS): Offsite Artist for all ingame assets - except animated sprites.
Mad Skills II - Turborilla (iOS): Offsite Art Director, UI design, Branding
Mad Skills BMX - Turborilla (iOS): UI design & Branding
Zombie Minesweeper: a Love Story - **Self Owned(iOS):** Co-Designer, level design, Art, Animation and Branding.
Paparazzi - Gnosis Games (PC download): Artist
Private Eye - Gnosis Games (PC download),
Candace Kane's Candy Factory - Gnosis Games (DS, Wii, & PC download): Supervising Artist
Five mini social networking games while at Gnosis Games: Candy Arcade, Sugar Blitz, Seek'n Find, Buck Hunt, & Gnosis Chinese Checkers.

Other Notable Projects:

Zombie Minesweeper (ZM): a Love Story - developed and released my own game with my friend and colleague for iOS/Android/PC. I was the creator, co-designer, level creator, artist, and marketer. ZM was featured multiple times on Google Play, and rave reviews by Kotaku, Touch Arcade, Jay is Games, and GameZebo (to name a few!). My biggest regret on this project was not making it free to play with tools to add new content for players.

Puzzle Path: Match 3 Magic - *Self Publishing - currently in production! (iOS & Android).*
This is a passion project to create a beautifully crafted, pixel art, match 3 game, with an enchanting cast of characters and rich world map that leads the player through a charming coming of age story in a world of magic and adorable animals.

"Guy in a Box" Poem/Short Story - was selected by Mainframe Entertainment to be developed into a full Short Film Script. I co-developed the script and wrote the Narration. I still intend on using this story to create a thoughtful and heartfelt game which addresses the personal struggle to overcome self doubt and bullying.

Fraser Valley Free Learners - I am a board member, volunteer Facilitator and co-founder of a democratic free school for youth ages 5 - 18. I started this learning community out of my passion and desire to create a space where kids can have the freedom to direct their own learning while being supported by and responsible to a diverse community of other children and adults. On most days you'll find me making & playing games, art, and facilitating meetings to solve problems and improve community culture.

SKILLS & EDUCATION

Software

Unity 3D - Skilled
Google Suite: Spreadsheets, Docs, Slides - Highly Skilled
Adobe Photoshop - Highly Skilled
Adobe Animate/Flash - Highly Skilled
JavaScript/HTML5 for games - Junior Skill Level
Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, AfterEffects - Skilled
Qubical Constructor (3D voxel modeling package) - Skilled

Formal Education

Creative Empowerment Facilitation (Level 1) - *Partners for Youth Empowerment*, Washington, USA - Nov 2018 partnersforyouth.org

Agile Learning Facilitation Training - Private 8 day training at *Fraser Valley Free Learners*, Mission, BC. Hosted by facilitators from: agilelearningcenters.org/ - Oct 2018.

First year courses in Colour Theory, Painting, and Sculpture - *Camosun College,* Vancouver BC - 2004

Art & Animation for Games Foundation - *Art Institute*, Vancouver/Burnaby - 2003/04
Classical & 3D animation, Drawing, Storyboarding, Game Design, Lighting & Texturing, Video editing and Compositing. (GPA 3.80/4.0)

NLP Practitioner - *NLP Canada*, Toronto Ontario - 2001
Two week intensive training in the practice of Neuro Linguistic Programming in relation to psychology, verbal and non verbal communication, learning styles, leadership, and personal improvement.

Web Design (part time) - *British Columbia Technical Institute: 2000*
Part time courses in HTML and Flash programming. (GPA 3.90/4.0)

Civil Technology Structural Diploma - *Red River College* - Winnipeg Manitoba: 1997-2000.
Study and application of structural and civil building technology, physics, materials, and design.
Including twelve months of co-op experience and Final Thesis. (GPA 4.0/4.5)

Employment History

2016 - 2018: Senior Designer (Mobile) - East Side Games - Vancouver, BC.

As a senior designer I was in charge of creating and holding the vision from prototype to launch
for a match 2 collapse style puzzle game called Dragon Up: Match 2 Hatch. I created all feature
designs, as well as level and economy design for this title throughout production.
While at ESG I worked on Live-ops mobile titles such as Trailer Park Boys: Greasy Money and
was in charge of creating and running the weekly 2 day mini events. I designed and balanced the
events based on KPIs, established player rewards and created unique player experiences using
existing tools and features. My events where well received by the players and also increased
profits by over 30%.

2012 - 2016: Designer (Mobile/Social) - East Side Games - Vancouver, BC.

Designer for mobile and social games specializing in game and UI design. I led a small team
through an intense prototyping and early development phase of a unique puzzle strategy game
and IP.

2011-2012: Independent developer & Contractor - Vancouver, BC.

Self published an iOS game as the artist/animator and co-game designer for Zombie
Minesweeper: a love story. Contract work as GUI artist with Klei Entertainment and Art
Director/Artist for various independent casual games and iOS titles. Most notable being Triple
Town (facebook/G+), and Art Director for the mobile game Mad Skills BMX.

2010: 2D Artist – Fit Brains - Vancouver, BC.

Concept through to final art for web and iOS games. Worked closely with game designers to
establish the flow and game play elements both visually and from a game play perspective.
Worked in office and from home while maintaining close communication with team members to
meet milestones and streamline the art pipeline.

2006- 2009: Supervising Artist – Gnosis Games/Threewave Software - Vancouver, BC.

Concept through to final art for web and pc based games. Responsible for leading a small team of artists through all stages of production.
Worked closely with art director, character artist and animator to establish the overall visual brand for our target audience and all the assets for the game. Managed the porting of all art to a 3rd party company who released the game for Nintendo DS & Wii.

2005-06: Designer – Creative Services, Mainframe Entertainment - Vancouver, BC.

Created motion graphics for web, film, and broadcast. Created promotional stills using 3D and 2D art with high level of quality and brand consistency. Worked on self directed projects as well as part of a design team to find creative solutions for clients.

2004-05: Instructor – Continuing Studies, Langara College - Vancouver, BC.

Course creation and instruction of Adobe Flash and Photoshop courses for continuing studies department.
Received consistently excellent student reviews of the course layout, assignments, and instruction.

2004: Post Production Assistant – Broken Saints, Budget Monks Productions - Vancouver, BC.

Digital effects painting, Flash animation and DVD authoring.

2002-03: Web Designer/Flash Developer – Red River College - Winnipeg, MB.

Created graphics and Flash games for online learning courses. Worked within the WebCT environment to implement new and creative interactive course material.

2001- 03: Freelance Graphic/Web Designer & Flash Programming

Contract work for various firms across Canada. Specializing with Flash Internet and CD-ROM advertising, educational material, and web design:

Pixel graphics for cell phone games for PhantomFiber, Toronto.

Flash touch-screen interface programming for Del-Touch, Toronto.

Flash promotional advertisement on CD-ROM for Davinci Software, Toronto.

Flash info and promo tool on CD-ROM for Global TV, Winnipeg.

Dynamic, web based Flash game programming for World Cup Fishing, Winnipeg.

2000 – 2001: Web Designer - Domain 7 Solutions Ltd. - Vancouver, BC.

Designed and managed various commercial web sites, collaborated with design team in developing user friendly interfaces and navigational systems for the web.

REFERENCES (from LinkedIn)

Charles Barker
Former Lead Game Designer at East Side Games. Charles managed Lara directly.

"I had the pleasure of working with Lara consulting on the mobile game Dragon Up! Match 2 Hatch. She had flashes of brilliance with designing the mechanics for the game. I remember being impressed with her design for the extra move rules and the way the levels incentivized different player behavior. Each level created a delightful, subtle progression of teaching the optimal strategy.

Her experience in Flash/ActionScript development in the past provides her with the invaluable skills that extend beyond the scope of her role as a Designer. Her passion and expertise in game development makes her ideal as a design lead to any team lucky enough to work with her.

Lara is a colleague who gets things done, even when not prompted, and she especially excels at team building. She balances the needs of growing each games core loop features while helping to drive departments in the correct way to get the right changes at the right time.

I've valued the fact that Lara is not afraid of speaking truth to power and candid discussions with her are always productive.

I trust and respect her as a colleague, and would work with her again without a second thought."

Jamie Ip

Lead Game Designer at East Side Games. Jamie managed Lara directly on the development of Budfarm: 420.

"Lara was a big part of my design team when we were getting our game to soft launch and during the soft launch period. Her strong documentation skills and eagerness to work with other disciplines on the team made implementation of features an easy, collaborative and creative process.

Lara's strong design sense comes from her ability to view a game from different user perspectives and being able to find those problem areas that need addressing. She pushes for intuitive, simple but interesting designs that any type of user can grasp easily initially and then get deeper as they get engaged with the game. She was passionate about her designs and made sure that people understood her rationale on why the design would be beneficial for the user.

Lara is a good fit for any studio looking to create highly polished games and I would not hesitate to recommend her for any design role within your organization."

Steven Sauer

Senior Software Engineer at East Side Games - Lara worked with Steven on prototyping and early development of a puzzle game.

"It's been a pleasure working with Lara on every occasion. She presents strong design principles and a fearless drive to innovate and refine those principles. On top of being an exceptional designer, her communication with artists, programmers, and producers has proven that she has a great understanding of other disciplines.

When speaking with Lara, you always know you are getting the truth and her honest opinion. Matched with her open mind, it makes it very easy to discuss tough decisions with her, as well as expect conclusions will be reached."

Galan Akin

Creative Director at East Side Games. Galan managed Lara directly at various times throughout her time at East Side Games.

"I worked with Lara as her manager for almost 6 years, and appreciated all her contributions immensely. Lara has a tremendous, ever-growing skill-set, fed by her curiosity and desire to solve problems. Her ability to understand design, art, technical, AND business realities gives her the aptitude to hold and champion the vision for a project. While she is not afraid to argue passionately for her point of view (something I appreciate), this is always done in the interest of making the end result better and not tied to ego.

I would not hesitate to recommend Lara for almost any position, as she has a substantial body of knowledge and is a very fast learner."

Jack Kelly

Design Director at East Side Games. Lara reported to directly to Jack while working on Dragon Up Match 2 Hatch as well as through quarterly check ins with his role as Design Director.

"Lara Kehler embodies that hard-to-find designer that blends passion and adaptability. She has successfully combined years of creative development skills, superior understanding of design principles and a passion for any project with which she is involved. This passion shows through in her ability to provide great ideas, deliver designs quickly, and iterate effectively as well as efficiently. She is definitely an asset to any company!"