Transcript of Tina Micklethwaite, User Interface Artist

The coolest part of my job is… I get to make video games for people all over the world!

A user interface artist, or UI artist, is a graphic designer for video games. I was actually encouraged to do whatever I wanted and the arts field was definitely my chosen path. Unfortunately a lot of my friends were told there wasn't a future in it and I do know a lot of people now that have chosen business administration and they aren't as happy in it as they would have been if they would have been able to go into the arts.

I first started out going to school for 3D animation and special effects, from there moved onto a production arts course for graphic design. When I first moved to Halifax, I became a stop motion animator for CBC working on Poko and Lunar Jim—two children's shows—and then became a user interface artist.

I love my job so much. It's amazing working in creative environment like this. Generally, it's pretty casual; casual but professional. So, you know, one minute we'll be working away on a project putting in mega overtime the next minute you'll have to duck because someone has suddenly decided to have a Nerf gun fight.

As an artist these days especially, it's really tough to get into an arts field without having technology kind of come along side of it. Technology is about half of the job here; I use desktop publishing software, graphic software. We have a set up for building games; which we all need to understand in order to test what we're doing.

As a user interface artist, I'm sort of the go between, between the artist and the programmers, because I'm the one that's involved with setting up the screens, setting up buttons, animations, overlays. I think the most difficult thing about this job and this industry is the hours you have to put into it. Not having overtime on a project is practically unheard of. But if you're in this industry then chances are you're passionate about this industry and the overtime is, you know, icing on the cake, really.

The video game industry is an amazing industry. I think the greatest benefit is you can travel so much; there are studios all around the world. It's very unlikely to find a large city anywhere that does not have at least one major gaming studio.

The best advice that I could give is if you are passionate about something, you should go for it; because no one else has to live your life but you, so you might as well do what you enjoy.