

# Michael Rud Jakobsen

## Senior Game Designer

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### SHIPPED GAMES

**Successor** · 2025 · Playwood  
**Wartile** · 2018–2020 · Playwood  
**HITMAN** · 2016 · IO Interactive  
**Kane & Lynch 2** · 2010 · IO Interactive

**Senior Game Designer** with 20+ years of experience across AAA and independent games released on PC and consoles. I have hands-on experience designing and prototyping gameplay features and developing deep game systems for procedural worlds. I have spearheaded two full-cycle indie game productions with cross-disciplinary teams, from concept to commercial release.

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Character & encounter design
- Deep system design
- Procedural game worlds
- Player economy & progression
- Level design
- Prototyping
- Playtesting & user research
- Cross-functional team leadership
- Team mentoring
- Documentation & communication

### TOOLS

- Engine** Unreal Engine 5 + Blueprints
- Production** Jira, Confluence, Miro, Trello, Microsoft Excel, Google Suite
- Other** Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere Pro

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed soft prototyping for HITMAN, a paper/board game method** that tested mechanics and level design to validate the fun factor and reduce costly rework.
- Product owner on a scalable pre-mission economy and progression system** designed for a live service model on HITMAN.
- Designed procedural and scalable game systems** used in Successor to support live updates.
- Spearheaded the production of two full indie game titles**, Successor and Wartile, for commercial releases across PC, PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo, Tilt Five AR, and Meta Quest VR in partnership with Oculus Publishing.

### EXPERIENCE

#### Lead Game Designer & Game Producer

May 2014 – Jan 2026

Playwood Project, Copenhagen · Wartile & Successor

#### GAME DESIGN

- Lead designer on combat, character, and enemy systems**, defining abilities, balancing stats, tuning AI behaviors, and iterating on feel across Wartile and Successor.
- Designed and implemented levels in Unreal Engine 5**, establishing gameplay loops, pacing beats, encounter flow, and aligning with environment art direction.
- Led world-building, narrative design, and quest structures**, crafting lore, player progression arcs, and story beats for campaign-sized sections.
- Contributed hands-on to prototype game mechanics**, using node-based blueprints in Unreal Engine 5.

#### PRODUCTION & PROCESS

- Maintained the gameplay and feature backlog**, assessing design decisions and priorities.
- Managed user-research questionnaires and facilitated playtesting events**, converting feedback and quantitative data into actionable tasks.
- Created and maintained production roadmaps**, milestone plans, and submission schedules while balancing scope, risk, and delivery status across multi-year cycles.
- Collaborated closely with external and internal stakeholders to plan milestones**, align expectations, and drive projects toward predictable and high-quality releases.

**Game Designer / Lead Designer (2012–2013)**

Sep 2010 – Mar 2014

IO Interactive, Copenhagen · AAA title HITMAN (2016) · budget around \$50M · team of around 170

- **Designed systems and features for pre-mission economy & progression** covering equipment, gadgets, intel, and upgrades, structured to allow regular additions of new content without structural changes.
- **Designed, prototyped & communicated core gameplay systems**, including stealth, interactions, and disguise, with clear documentation so other disciplines could use and implement them.
- **Prototyped missions and levels** with a strong focus on player agency, systemic gameplay, and replayability, collaborating closely with a cross-disciplinary team to prepare and validate production-ready content.
- **Managed the game design backlog and supervised a team of 4–5 game designers**, aligning priorities, reviewing work, and supporting consistent delivery across milestones.
- **Facilitated comprehensive playtesting with User Research**, including on-site sessions in the US with North American audiences, and synthesized feedback into actionable design improvements.

**Environment Artist**

Sep 2008 – Sep 2010

IO Interactive, Copenhagen · AAA title Kane &amp; Lynch 2 (2010) · budget around \$23M · team of around 150

- **Prepared levels for art outsourcing** and ensured assets and layouts were production-ready and met the visual art direction.

**Environment Artist / Lead Env Artist**

Aug 2004 – May 2008

ZeitGuyz, Copenhagen · Recoil: Retrograde (cancelled)

- **Contributed environment art and level design** across multiple stages of production, translating the project's visual direction into cohesive in-game environments.
- **Supervised a team of 3–4 artists**, managing workflows, pipelines, and quality standards to ensure consistent output across levels.

**EDUCATION****Master's Degree, Digital Design**Danish Design School, Copenhagen ·  
1998–2003Specialised in Game Design. BA in  
Ceramics and Glass, 2001.**Business School HHX, Ballerup**

Student · 1991–1994

**TEACHING & MENTORSHIP**

- Guest teacher and mentor at DADIU  
(National Academy of Digital Interactive  
Entertainment)
- Delivered guest lectures introducing game  
development to students (5th–9th grade)

**LANGUAGES****Danish**

Native

**English**

Fluent, written &amp; spoken