



computer file. Killing of a lens led to permanent deletion of the files in case (1). Fink Shurke was on board for the audio again, and the 'indie dream team' (in Gage's words) was completed by hiring an American designer for the art of *Ridiculous Fishing*. With Roy and Paul tied up on Serious Sam, *Dinosaur Zookeeper* and other personal projects, Vlambeer was happy to give Chicago-based graphic designer Greg Wohlwend a go. A friend of Zach's, Wohlwend made a name for himself with indie games like *Solipskier* (where players draw tracks for a stunt skier), and would later be responsible for renowned mobile games *Hundreds and Thousands*.

To accommodate the new projects, Vlambeer established a couple of rules and practices. Jan Willem spent time hammering out a design practice that could facilitate their multi-sided portfolio. The design process was scrutinised, which led to a 'home rule' for Vlambeer designers: they could not reference other games when discussing Vlambeer game ideas.

"You could not say things like 'it will be like Zelda, but with guns' or something like that. You had to phrase it like: you walk around [in the game world], carry a weapon and go on an adventure. Every system, item or mechanic should have its own explanation, in our own words and without invoking the context of other games. You went to think fresh, and your own solutions to design challenges without looking at the solutions of others, because you may miss some important steps in your thinking."

Jan Willem Nijman | 2016



On the business side, Ram and Willem, Vlambeer would set their own creative responsibility as far as possible. To do this, they loaded into the studio the other was doing business. In the initial phase, understanding came from frustration with time-wasting arguments. At that point they could leave something a sidekick of anything to go on to something else, and would work on their own. As a partner, they would interview by Sam's own. They were not a two-man team with a creative director. There was no way to win an argument. The only way an argument is by going to the end of the road. We do... We have no space for... We have no...

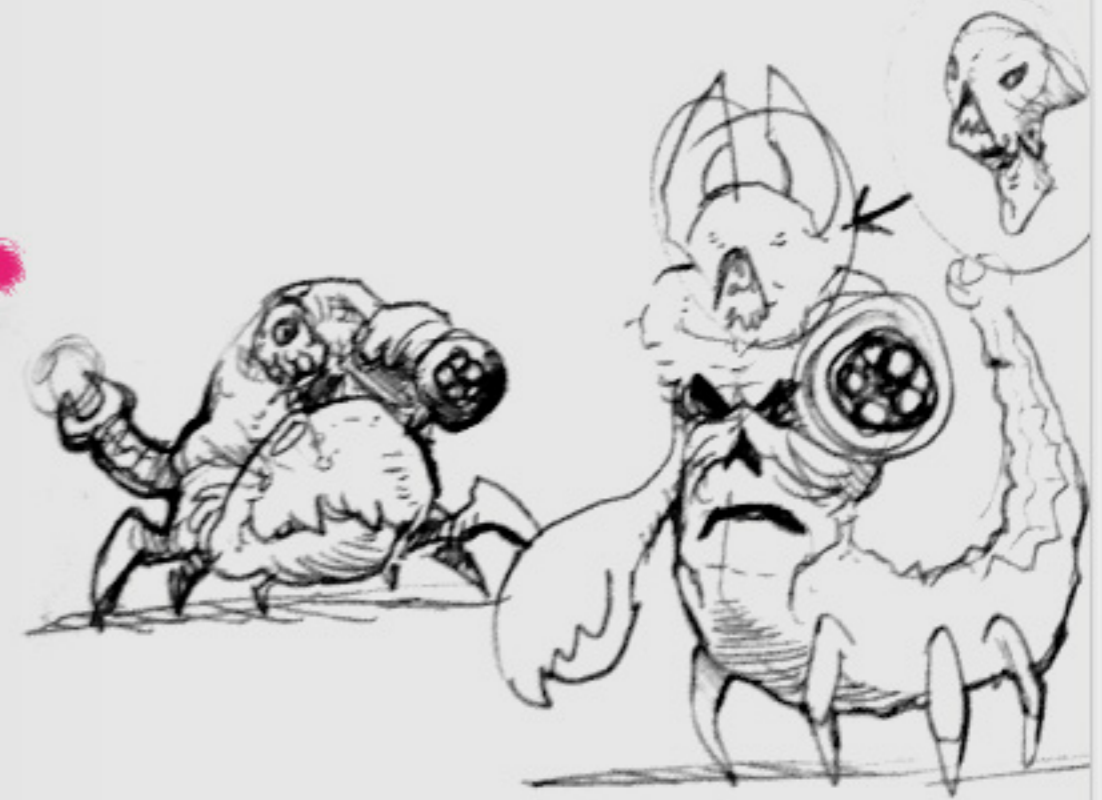


Iteration is an important thing

When it comes to art games, I don't know how to talk about that. It's not like they were just going beyond anything else; they were just going to do it on their own terms. This was a quick road down to for both securing and, probably, the best of both worlds. For autonomy, it was a bonus with Vlambeer's studio. It's not like they were the personal, private, or creative. Ram valued it as important to control the creative flow Vlambeer was in, to make sure to take on a pace control (Jan Willem), and let JW be as far away as he could.

Jan Willem was a designer, he takes all that. But you know, if you're a designer, what he wants to do is to know the thing, what's the reality? And that's the only way to do it, and that's the only way to do it.

Jan Willem | 2016

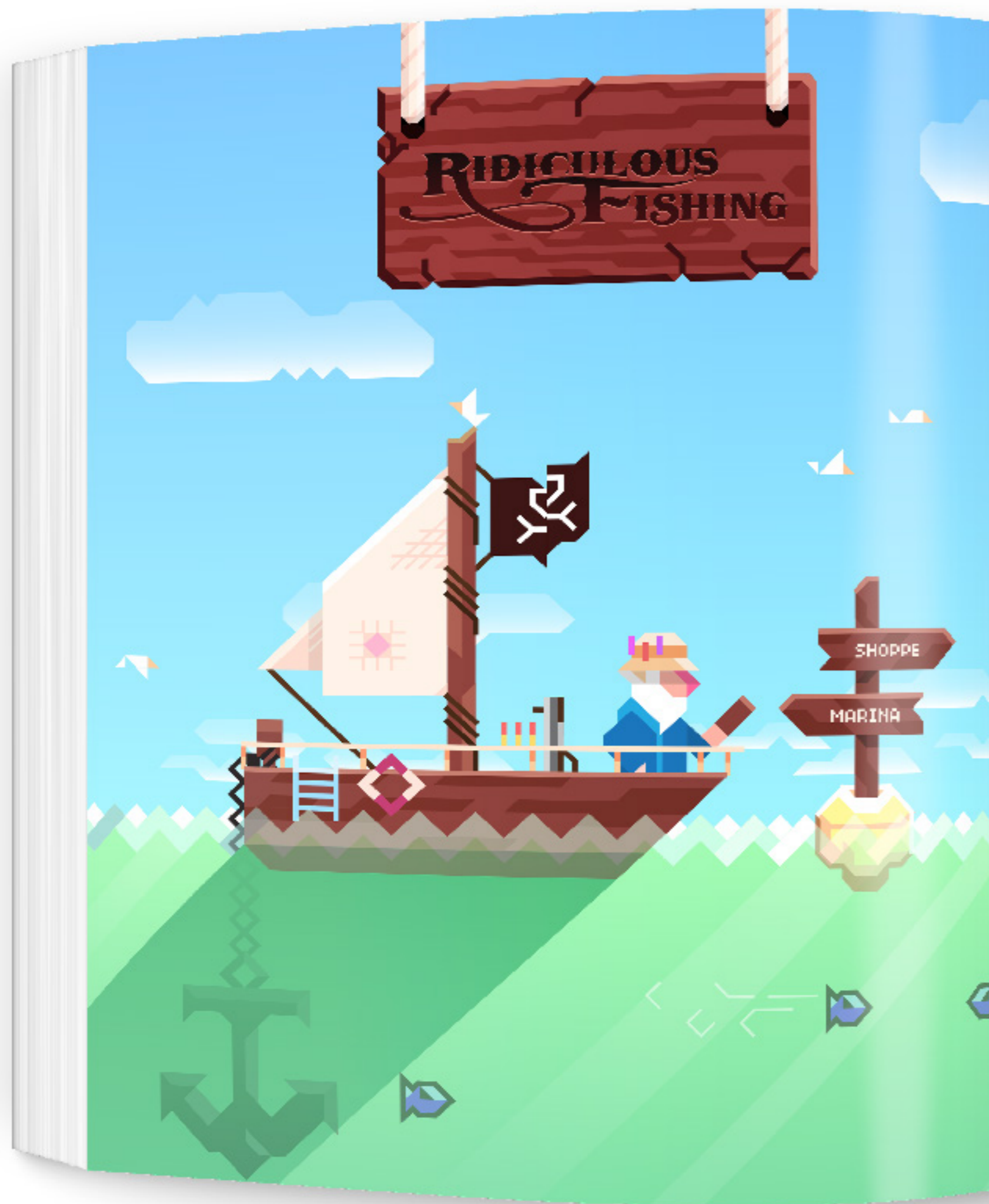


The newfound workflow practice extended to the growing group of collaborators. All were hired on a basis of mutual respect, admiration and trust; they worked independently from other team members, doing 'their own thing' within set parameters, but without much intervention from Ram or Jan Willem. If you ask why the visual design of *Ridiculous Fishing* is so different from *Nuclear Throne* or *Dinosaur Zookeeper*, it is because the games simply have different artists on the team. They work in near-complete autonomy, building art based on their talents and inspiration, with an art director from Jan Willem. Greg Wohlwend explains Vlambeer's informal and hands-off attitude in detail. Zach Gage had contacted him on behalf of Vlambeer about possible work, leading to the meet-up with Jan Willem and Ram at the hotel in San Francisco.

*"I remember liking JW's art style in *Ridiculous Fishing*, but feared I could not find an art style with the same kind of soul. We discussed this at the hotel, and I would have to think about it for a couple of weeks, and the ideas just came. After a while I started sketching and landed on a pirate ship mockup that had the 45-degree angular shapes that would eventually define the art style, which I sent over to JW, Zach and Ram. They liked it a lot, so we moved from there. It was all super informal, like being in a band. If JW would not have liked my art, he would not work with me and that would have been OK too, you know? We handed over that informal attitude; top-down assignments do not work for me. You have to give someone agency, and they will give it their best."*

Greg Wohlwend | 2016





TITLE
 RIDICULOUS FISHING

DESIGNED
 MATHIEU

DESIGN
 MATHIEU

ART DIRECTION
 PHILIPPE

TYPE
 GOTHIC

DESIGNER
 MATHIEU

EDITOR
 MATHIEU

ILLUSTRATION
 MATHIEU

PRODUCTION
 MATHIEU

DISTRIBUTION
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CONTACT
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