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About this overview

This overview was written by Sverre, our icons-guy (concept artist really but he's also the one doing our icons). It's a fairly short and succinct overview and not meant as a tutorial, merely a look into how we do the Conan Exiles icons.

Source files

The source files for our icons are always 512x512 px, and are not generated from the thumbnail of the mesh - rather, they are grabbed from ingame renders to get the angle we want.

Unreal Render setup

Custom lights are set up in a scene ("**Photoshoot_map**" can be loaded where this has been set up already) around the object with neutral white light

- Render in UE4 with 3/4 view.
- Use the property "Render CustomDepth Pass" on the object's skeletal and/or static mesh
- Use the "Use Custom Depth as mask" in the high res screenshot function to get transparent background in screenshots)

Photoshop

In Photoshop, paint light and shadow manually to fit each individual item and make it look distinct in thumbnail size.

- Paint warm light in overlay layer as a gradient from top left angle.
- Paint cool shadow on multiply layer on the opposite side.

Add a layer style outer glow with settings below to make the white outline:

- Blend mode: normal
- Opacity: 69%
- Color: 100% white
- Spread: 69%
- Size: 1

Keep the background transparent

Export/Import

Export the icon as a 128x128 px .png and then import it as an asset in UE4.

Actual example using Paint.net

Here we will go through how to create an icon from scratch – all you need is a mesh in the dev-kit as well as the program “Paint.net”

Paint.Net can be downloaded here: <https://www.getpaint.net/download.html>

Step 1 - Load the Photoshoot map

This map has everything we need already set up. Once you have loaded the map, find the mesh that you want to make into an icon and place it in the map.

Make sure that the mesh is not partially below ground-level

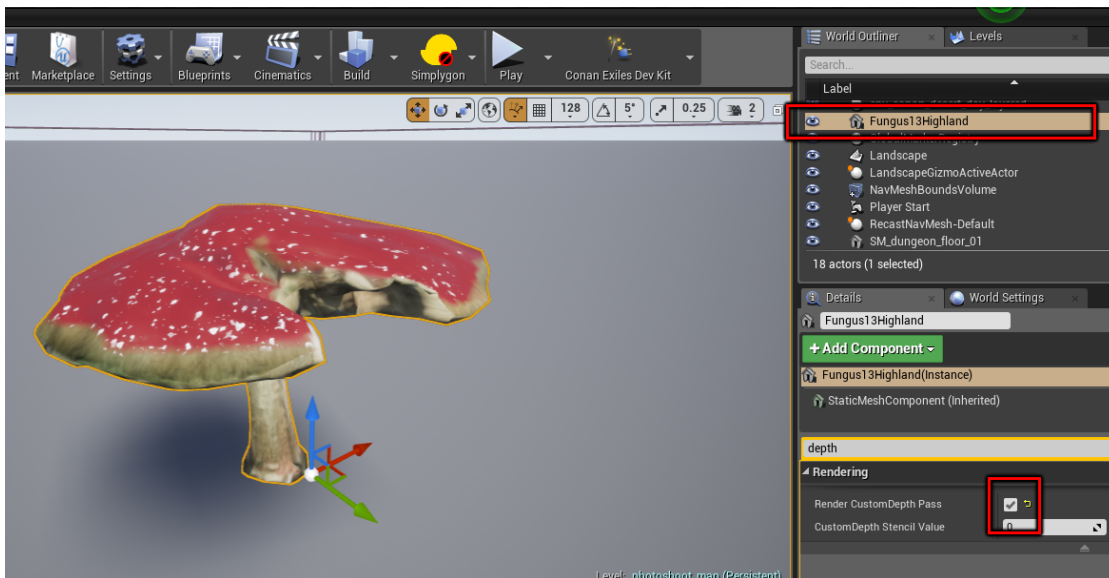
Zoom in on your object so that it covers most of the screen. We do this so that we can get as many details into the screenshot as possible.

Now we need to set up the properties that allows us to set up a screenshot for this object.

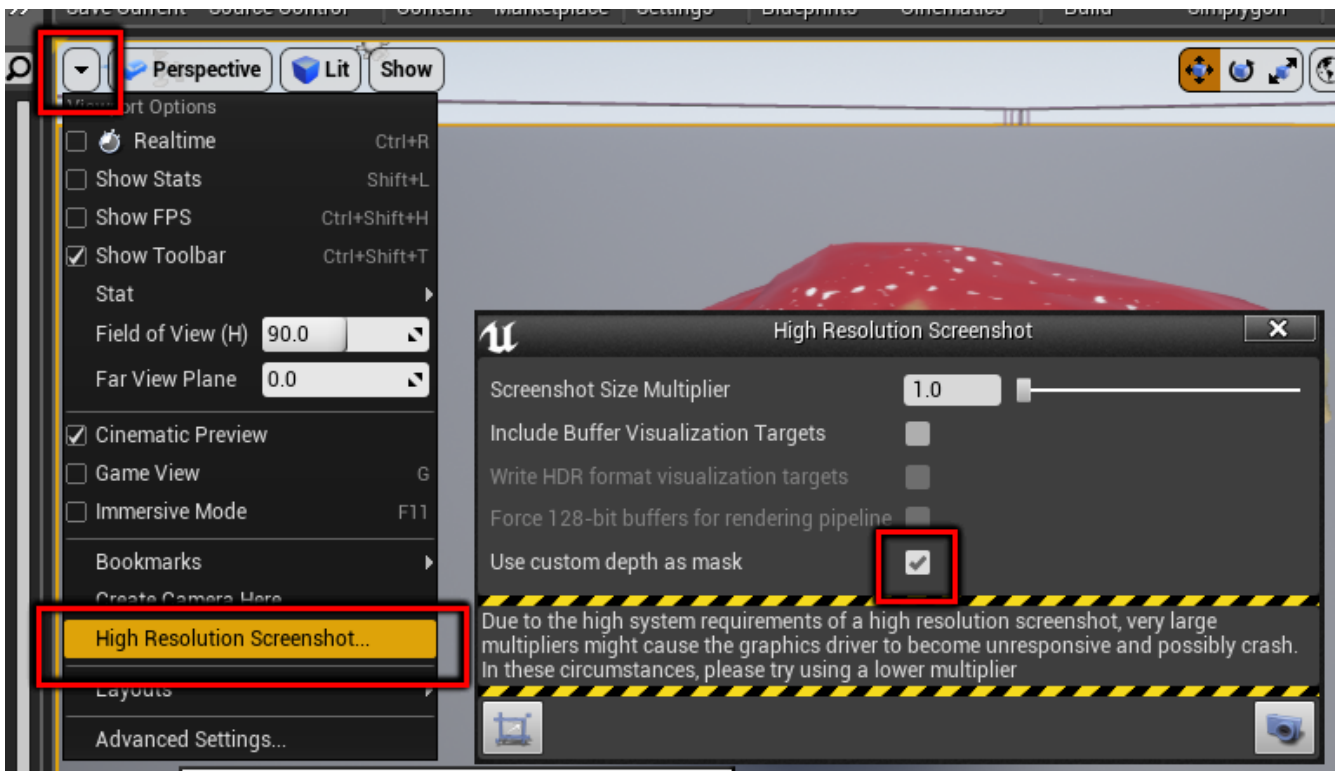


Step 2 - Depth render and screenshot

First, select the mesh or meshes you want to take a screenshot of. In the Details tab for the mesh/es, find the entry called "Render CustomDepth Pass" and click it.

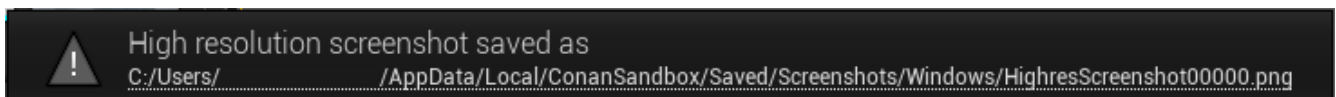


Worth noting is that if you have both skeletal and static meshes, you will need to do them separately. Once you have set the meshes up, we need to activate the actual screenshot function.



Once you click the "Use custom depth as mask" option, the background of the map will turn green. If you can't see your mesh, it's because it's not set up as described above.

The bottom right hand button in this window takes a screenshot of your viewport. and a small dialogue-box will appear in the bottom right-hand side of the screen with a link to where Unreal saved the screenshot. Clicking the link in this popup will open the folder where it saved the screenshot.



Step 3 - Paint.net

Load the image into Paint.net and edit the image. This document won't cover the details on how to do this, but you may opt to crop out parts of the image, or otherwise manipulate it if you want. When you are done with the image, you will want to have a square image of size 128x128.

Export this image to a .png file

Once you have your icon as a file, you can drag it into Unreal into the folder you want the icon. You don't need to do anything complex in terms of import options, just drag the image into the content browser and drop it there, and your icon will appear.

Step 4 - Set up Texture group

Texture groups for Icons should always be set to "UI". Do this by double-clicking the icon and select "UI" from the Texture Group options (this can be found under the "Level of Detail" section in the Details pane).

Your icon is now ready to be used.

