

'Prince of Persia' creator 'never imagined' game would be his magic carpet

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Jordan Mechner grew up dreaming of making both video games and movies.

For video game maker Jordan Mechner, "The Prince of Persia" has allowed him to achieve a childhood dream.

"I had two dreams growing up: make video games and make movies," the acclaimed creator told AFP. "Thanks to 'Prince of Persia' I've achieved both."

Thirteen years after the last installment of the pioneering [game](#), Mechner's medieval hero is set to make a new appearance in "The Lost Crown", reviving a 30-year-old franchise that has sold more than 20 million copies.

French video game maker Ubisoft will release the new action-adventure Thursday inspired by the "One Thousand and One Nights" folktales.

Much has changed between the game's genesis in Mechner's 1980s California "home studio" to the latest version developed in Ubisoft's studios in the French Mediterranean city of Montpellier.

It was one of the first games to use "[motion capture](#)", where movements are first filmed to make them more realistic once transferred to the screen.

Back then, the 59-year-old American who has lived in Montpellier since 2015, used a VHS camera to film his little brother doing the full range of movements the hero would need in the game. He then uploaded them image by image to a computer, using the rotoscoping technique borrowed from 20th century cartoon makers.

Mechner's amateur pianist father was also part of the family affair, composing the game's music. "It really was an artisanal production," he said.

Upon its release in 1989, gamers were impressed by the advanced animation and fluid movements. And it established Mechner, who had already received attention in 1984 with "Karateka", a game he made

entirely himself while still a student.

He'd taught himself the basics of programming by reading magazines and experimenting on his Apple II computer which he was given as a teenager.

'Princess of Persia'

"Prince of Persia" became a cult saga with each new tech advance, above all going from 2D to 3D. It was acquired by Ubisoft in 2000 and was turned into a hit Disney movie in 2010.

Mechner said he "never imagined" that the game's universe would last as long as it has.

He's now working on [graphic novels](#), a popular art form in France. His "Replay: Memoires d'une famille" (Memories of a Family), published by Delcourt, was released in April and recounts the story of his father and grandfather, Austrian Jewish refugees who made it to the United States just before World War II.

It will be released in English in March by Macmillan's First Second Books.

It tells how his great uncle Joji managed to get an exit visa to move to France shortly after the Nazi takeover of Austria by showing off two watercolors painted by Adolf Hitler that he'd bought years earlier and stumbled on while cleaning out a cellar.

"After retiring, my grandfather spent three years writing a family memoir," he said. "I have to one day share these incredible family stories I grew up with."

He also mixes in his [personal life](#), such as an exchange with his two children after he told them in 2015 that he was moving to France.

His son told him, "You should do something else besides working on "Prince of Persia." To which his daughter added, "At least make "Princess of Persia."

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