

Mike Safianoff

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Ridgefield, CT

USA and CAN citizen

DEMO REEL

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Character animator with 20+ years in film, VFX, games, and Tech/VR. Experienced supervisor, lead, and specialist with a strong multi-studio track record.

SKILLS

- Character animation, specializing in stylized films.
- Keyframe and Mocap experience.
- Animation pre-production experience at multiple studios.
- Scheduling, bidding animation and cross-dept tech development.
- Technical and pipeline collaboration/rig and tooling dev.
- Professional mentoring.

WORK HISTORY:



Dreamworks Animation, Remote - *Senior Animator*

Mar 2022 - Nov 2026

- Returned to the studio to animate complex comedic sequences for Shrek 5 in close collaboration with directors and supervisors.
- Immediately tasked with high difficulty shots, while relearning dreamwork's custom software.
- Consistently delivered complex sequences on or ahead of schedule.



Double Fine, Remote - *Senior Animator*

June 2022 - Mar 2025

- Senior Animator responsible for NPC creatures on Keeper.
- Designed and implemented interactive behaviors where NPCs engaged with the player character, each other, and the surrounding environment.
 - Working in Unreal 5 and Maya, in close collaboration animation supervisor and with ENG to get additional animation behaviors/fix broken things.
- Contributed scripted moments, motion cycles, emote suites, cutscenes, and the bulk of in-game NPC animation work.
- Keeper was also nominated for the best character animation in a video game annie award.



Meta, Remote - *Lead Animator*

June 2022 - April 2025

- Drove artistic quality improvements in Meta's VR open world; automated speech, face tracking, facial animation and for pre-rendered mobile content and marketing cinematics.
- Developed an animator-friendly FACS rig that balanced exaggerated performances with face tracking compatibility - across multiple platforms with varying tech constraints.
- Partnered with ENG on artistically controlled animation authoring at scale.
- Led artistic and technical improvements for animated avatar stickers, doubling user engagement.
- Created a new animation style, style guide, and high-quality visual targets for Meta avatars, ensuring consistency across teams and vendors.
- Spearheaded cross-functional production improvements, significantly enhancing animation quality.
- Partnered with AI teams to improve face tracking and signal consistency.
- Overhauled the viseme based automated speech used by the SDK, improving believability, articulation, and clarity.



Steamroller Studios, Remote - Animation supervisor

July 2021 - June 2022

- Led our team of animators working in collaboration Framestore and Dneg.
- Creative feedback and support, animation supervision to keep quality high, technical troubleshooting and scheduling/bidding.
- Provided studio wide artistic and technical training, as well as guide junior animators in industry standards and best practices, helping many advance to lead roles within the studio.



Blue Sky Studios, Greenwich, CT

May 2015 - Feb 2021

- Specialized in performance animation for: Nimona, Spies in Disguise, Ferdinand, and Ice Age: Collision Course.
- Collaborated closely with production technology and rigging teams to develop new workflows for the next-generation studio pipeline, while contributing to long-term rigging and software advancements.



Dreamworks/Pdi, Redwood City, CA

May 2010 - April 2015

- Worked closely with supervisors and directors to create strong, narrative driven animation choices, while upholding the film's artistic and technical standards.
- Projects: Puss in Boots, Madagascar 3, Turbo, Secrets of the Scroll, Peabody and Sherman, How to Train Your Dragon 2, Penguins of Madagascar, Almost Home, and Home.



2K Games, Marin, CA

Sept 2008 - March 2009

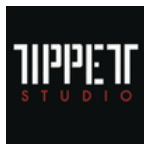
- Animator for all first-person animations, delivering nearly all hand and weapon animations in Bioshock 2, a dual-wielding FPS.
- Collaborated closely with game designers and programmers to create responsive, high-quality weapon and plasmid animations.



Industrial Light and Magic, San Francisco, CA

October 2009 - March 2010

- For the film Iron Man 2, I completed several shots, working with leads to deliver client's expectations.
- Mechanical animation, body mechanics and propelled flight animation in addition to motion capture and keyframe character animation.



Tippett Studios Berkeley, CA

2007, 2009 and 2015

- Realistic creature animation, including quadruped, biped, and flight for SpiderWick Chronicles (2007) and Cats and Dogs 2 (2009)
- Collaborated with supervisors and leads to define compelling performances in shots while ensuring timely delivery to meet client deadlines.
- Hybrid mocap and keyframe for Ted 2 (2015), 100% keyframe for Spiderwick Chronicles and Cats & dogs 2.



EA Tiburon Orlando, FL

July 2005 - December 2006

- Animated in-game characters and cinematics for *Superman Returns: The Video Game*.
- Created animations for multiple villains and prototyped a "grab" mechanic for Superman to lift cars.
- Worked closely with directors and storyboard artists to translate boards into 3D animatics and animated full cinematics, even briefly stepping in for the cinematics director during crunch.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE



CGTarian Los Angeles, CA

March 2014 - March 2019

- Created over 20 hours of lectures covering acting, workflow, anatomy, and appeal, guiding advanced animators in refining their facial animation skills.



iAnimate.net Remote

Jan 2011 - Sept 2013

- Taught multiple courses ranging from beginner to advanced animation and performance.
- Developed and delivered weekly lectures while providing detailed feedback to inspire and challenge students to refine their skills.



Expression College Emeryville, CA

July 2005 - December 2006

- Taught 3D animation using Maya, introducing students to essential principles and techniques.

- Offered personalized guidance on final projects, assisting students in refining their thesis work to align with their specific animation interests.

EDUCATION



Pratt Institute Brooklyn, NY - *BFA Computer Generated and Interactive Media*

Sept 2000 - May 2004