

# Erik Van Horn

Art Director • Animator • Animation Director

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## Professional Experience

### Director of Game Art & Associate Professor of Animation

*University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA (September 2016 – present)*

- Courses in 3D and 2D animation, game art and production
- Committee appointments include Strategic Planning Steering Committee, CAMD Executive Council, Faculty Council
- Curriculum development for undergraduate and graduate level courses in VR and emerging media

### VFX Artist

*VFX Legion, Burbank, CA (Summer 2021)*

- CG visual effects for upcoming feature films and TV series

### President and Founder

*Sinister Studios LLC, Ridley Park PA (Dec 2019 – present)*

- Content development for games, film and other animated media

### Animation Supervisor

*Gallus Entertainment, Toronto, ON (April 2016 – September 2016)*

- Supervising a team of animators on Netflix's *Luna Petunia*

### 3D Department Lead

*Rocket Science VFX, Toronto, ON (January 2016 – April 2016)*

- Visual Effects Lead on *Killjoys* Season 2 (Syfy channel, Space channel)

### Modeling/Rigging Supervisor

*Arc Productions, Toronto, ON (August 2015 - December 2015)*

- Supervised asset production for Netflix's *Tarzan* and Blue Sky's *Ice Age: The Great Egg-Scapade*

### Art Director

*North Star Games, Kensington, MD / Seattle, WA (May 2015 - August 2015)*

- Lead the UX and Visual Design effort for the digital division of North Star Games; prototyped their first game, *Evolution*

### Digital Art Director, Magic: The Gathering

*Wizards of the Coast (Hasbro), Renton, WA (2012 - 2015)*

- Senior Art Director for *Magic: Duels of the Planeswalkers 2014/2015*, *Magic Duels: Origins*, *Magic Online*'s upcoming refresh. Project Core Team member. UI/UX lead. Director for in-game cinematic videos, voiceover and soundtrack. Commissioning art director for 2D and 3D assets.
- Director of Magic trailers and animated videos from preproduction to post production, including *Theros* and *Tarkir* blocks
- Key architect in pipeline development for 3D, animation and video production
- Senior art direction across all Magic digital properties, from web apps to interactive trade show displays
- Key contributor to Magic card set campaign look & feel

### Game Production Program Chair

*International Academy of Design & Technology, Seattle, WA (2010 - 2012)*

- Game Program administration. Curriculum development in the game, animation & VFX fields. Employment and retention of a faculty of qualified industry professionals. Organization of advisory panels. Authoring/publishing of instructional material. Coordination of internships and graduate placement efforts. Organization of trade shows and events.
- Instructed classes in modeling, animation, UI/UX, drawing, level & environmental design, game design, texture and lighting

### Character & Lighting Technical Director

*yU+Co, Hollywood, CA (2010)*

- Lighting & Compositing, Rigging, Animation, Shading, Layout & Effects for international projects featuring Marvel Superheroes

### Lead Animator

*Pitch Black Games, Chandler, AZ (2010)*

- Character Lead, Rigging & Animation for *Dominus* (a cancelled MMO)

## **Animator**

**Total Immersion, Los Angeles, CA (2009 - 2010)**

- Character Animation & Rigging for high-profile augmented reality projects for such clients as Ubisoft, Mattel, and McDonald's

## **Lead Animator**

**Super 78, Hollywood, CA (2009)**

- Character Animation, Layout & Modeling for Cartoon Network's *Ben 10: Alien Swarm*

## **Senior Animation Training Specialist**

**Walt Disney Animation Studios, Burbank, CA (2005 - 2009)**

- Provided pipeline, art, and software training across all disciplines for all feature film productions
- Developed enrichment programs in foundational skills; organized and hired models and instructors for life drawing, sculpture, anatomy, film, animation, design and painting classes
- Worked with Visual Effects Supervisors and Technical Directors to anticipate and meet production training needs
- Worked with Tools Developers to create software to meet artist's needs
- Led many studio initiatives in animation toolsets, character rig development and experimental production pipelines
- Wrote and Directed CG shorts in the Disney Shorts Club program
- Features: *Chicken Little, Meet the Robinsons, Bolt, Princess and the Frog, Tangled*
- Shorts: *Glago's Guest, Prep and Landing, How to Hook Up Your Home Theater, Shorts Club projects, etc.*

## **Animation Training Specialist**

**Disney Circle 7 Studio, Glendale, CA (2004 - 2005)**

- First non-management employee at a new feature animation studio, involved with pipeline development from the ground up
- Worked with studio leadership to create the Artist Development program at DC7 Studios
- Provided orientation and pipeline training for over 300 employees within 1 year
- Contributed models, textures, animation and story ideas toward productions
- 1 year development on the original (cancelled) version of *Toy Story 3*

## **Lead Artist & Animator**

**Butterfly.net / Emergent Game Technologies, Shepherdstown WV / Calabasas, CA (2000 - 2004)**

- MMO title prototype, game demos for PC, Xbox and PS3; developed design document; designed, modeled, textured, rigged and animated characters and environments; Produced cinematic trailers
- Managed projects and personnel, developed production pipeline

## **Independent Animator & Designer (2004 - present)**

- Contract artist for various entertainment media companies, including **THQ, Sojourn Ent., Total Media Source, Heavy Hammer, Online Alchemy, Blue Omega, Valhalla Games, Fusion Creative.**
- Character and environmental design, modeling, rigging, animation, fx, graphics, storyboards, motion graphics, illustration
- Freelance work for independent films. Direction and production of music videos and short films.

## **VFX Training Instructor and Lecturer**

**Studio Arts (Hollywood), DisneyToon Studios, Disney Feature Animation, Disney Television Animation, Disney Circle 7 Animation, Savannah College of Art and Design, CalState LA, DigiPen (1999 - present)**

- Visual effects, animation and game art pipeline training using Maya, Photoshop, After Effects, Renderman, etc.
- Offering courses in CG Lighting, Layout, Modeling, Character Rigging & Animation, Dynamics, Motion Design

## **President & Cofounder**

**Epicenter, Inc. (Nonprofit community art center) (1994 - 1998)**

- Organized art exhibitions & events, managed funds, oversaw site development, primary media contact/promoter

## **Previous Experience**

- Graphic artist & web designer, High School Photography Instructor and Department Chair (Jefferson County, WV), custom museum mounts craftsman, theater set designer, journalist, cartoonist, musician/songwriter, and white water raft guide

## **Education**

### **MFA - Computer Art (Animation/VFX)**

**Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA (1998 - 2000)**

- With honors
- Several juried awards and scholarships
- 3D Character Animation, VFX, Motion Graphics, Painting, & 2D Animation

### **BFA - Fine Arts**

**Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV (1989 - 1993)**

- With honors

- Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Printmaking, & Computer Graphics
- Minors in English and Graphic Design

### Continuing Studies Courses, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA (2016-2019)

- Courses include screenwriting, filmmaking, hot glass

### Acting, Screenwriting, Storyboarding, Improv, Drawing, Animation & Film Workshops with the finest instructors in the world while running the animation training program at Disney Feature Animation

Some highlights:

- Richard Williams Animation Masterclass
- Ed Hooks Acting for Animators Workshop
- Bruce Block's Visual Story Seminar
- Eric Goldberg's Animation Workshop
- John Musker's Caricature Workshop
- Andreas Deja's Drawing for Animation Workshop
- Syd Field's Screenwriting Workshop
- Blake Snyder Screenwriting Workshop
- Robert McKee Story Seminar

### Skills and Expertise

- Film & Cinematic Direction
- Art Direction for Games & Film
- Animation Production & CG Supervision
- CG Character Animation
- 3D Modeling & Digital Sculpting
- Rigging, Character Setup & Technical Animation
- MoCap & Performance Capture
- Advanced Lighting & Compositing
- Shading Networks & Texture Painting
- Fluids/Particles, Simulation & Dynamics
- UI/UX
- Graphic Design & Interface Design
- Game Design
- Storyboarding, Visual Development & Illustration
- Character & Environment Design
- Cinematography & CG Layout
- Motion Graphics
- Film Editing
- Sound Design
- Shell, MEL & Python Scripting
- Screenwriting & Story Development

### Computer Applications

- **3D:** Maya, 3ds Max, SoftImage, Houdini, ZBrush, Mudbox, Modo, Vue, MotionBuilder, SketchUp
- **VR:** Oculus Quill & Medium, Tilt Brush, Tvorl, AnimVR, Gravity Sketch, MasterpieceVR, Sketchbox, ShapeLab
- **2D Animation:** Toon Boom Harmony, TV Paint, Animate CC, Moho, Adobe Character Animator, Storyboard Pro
- **Surfacing & Rendering:** Redshift3D, Renderman, Arnold, Mental Ray, V-Ray, KeyShot, Substance Suite, Quixel Suite, Photoshop, Corel Painter, ZBrush, 3d-Coat, Mari, Marmoset Toolbag, Deadline, other UV and painting/sculpting apps
- **Compositing & Post:** Nuke, IFF (Flame/Flint/Inferno), Maya Composite, Shake, After Effects, Premiere, Combustion, Fusion, Sony Vegas, Final Cut Pro, Mocha
- **Web Design & Multimedia:** Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Animate, Director, Illustrator, InDesign, Muse, Edge, WordPress
- **Game Engines:** Unity, Unreal, Hero, Gamebryo, Torque 3D, Stingray
- **Sound Design:** Vegas, SoundForge, Acid Pro, ProTools, Cubase, WaveLab, Adobe Audition, Audacity, FL Studio
- **Office Tools, Misc:** ShotGrid, Office Suites, Project, Visio, OneNote, Final Draft, Perforce/ CVS & source control software, issue tracking software such as JIRA/Bugzilla/FogBugz, DVD authoring, DeBabelizer Pro, Bridge, Camtasia, Captivate
- **Computer Languages:** HTML, Javascript, CSS, C++, Open Inventor, Python, Renderman RIB & Shading Languages, Maya MELscript, Flash Actionscript
- **Operating Systems and Game Platforms:** Windows, Unix/Linux, Mac OS, iOS, Android, Xbox, PlayStation

### Honors and Awards

- 1991 - 2019: A Variety of Awards and Placements in Juried Art Exhibitions
- 2019: President's Award for Excellence recipient, University of the Arts, Philadelphia PA
- 2018: *Character Development Workshop* published by Mercury Publishing
- 2017: Faculty Development Fund recipient, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
- 2004: second place international nVidia Make Something Unreal contest (*Damnation*, with Heavy Hammer)
- 1989 - 2002: Published fiction and non-fiction in various newspapers, magazines, and juried writing competitions
- 1998 - 2000: Morris Scheer Fellowship, International Competition for Student Artists
- 1998 - 2000: Dean's List @ SCAD
- 1999: Alias Certified Training in Character Animation (1999) and MEL scripting (2000)
- 1999: Nov. 8 Live Performance of real time animation at the Int'l Delphi Conference, Trustees Theater, Savannah, GA
- 1997: Artist-in-Residence, Boarman Arts Center, Martinsburg, WV
- Prolific Fine Arts Career, with over twenty solo shows from 1991 to the present, and paintings & drawings in over one hundred private collections
- Logos and designs used for film, stage, advertisements, posters, corporate identities and album covers

## Book Publications

- **3D Character Development Workshop: Rigging Fundamentals for Artists and Animators** © 2018 Mercury Learning & Information, ISBN-10: 1683921704

## Professional Organizations

- IGDA (International Game Developers Association)
- ACM SIGGRAPH, LA-SIGGRAPH
- ASIFA-Hollywood

## Community Service

- 2016 - 2020: Juror for SIGGRAPH Conference General Submissions and Poster Submissions
- 2016 - 2020: Site host for Global Game Jam (globalgamejam.org)
- 2017 - 2021: Democratic Committee Person (elected office), Precinct 3, Ridley Park PA
- 2017 - 2021: Poll watcher, municipal elections, Ridley Park

## Selected Filmography

- **Ambulance** (Michael Bay feature film, 2022) (VFX)
- **The Black Phone** (Feature film, 2022) (VFX)
- **Just Beyond** (TV Series, Disney+, 2022) (VFX)
- **Cirque du Soleil: Luna Petunia** (Netflix animated series, first season, 2016) (Animation Supervisor)
- **Killjoys** (Sci-Fi Channel series, second season, 2016) (3D Lead)
- **Tarzan and Jane** (Netflix animated series, 2016) (Modeling/Rigging Supervisor)
- **Ice Age: The Great Egg-Scapade** (Fox TV holiday special, 2016) (Modeling/Rigging Supervisor)
- **Magic: The Gathering card set trailers** (animated videos, 2012-2015) (Director)
- **Multiphasic** by Polyphasic (music video DVD, 2010) (Independent Animator, contributed 3 short films)
- **Tangled** (Disney Animation Studios feature film, 2010) (Sr. Training Specialist)
- **Disney's Prep & Landing** (ABC TV holiday special, 2009) (Training Lead)
- **The Princess and the Frog** (Disney Animation Studios feature film, 2009) (Sr. Training Specialist)
- **Bolt** (Disney Animation Studios feature film, 2008) (Sr. Training Specialist)
- **Meet the Robinsons** (Disney Animation Studios feature film, 2007) (Training Specialist)
- **Chicken Little** (Disney Animation Studios feature film, 2005) (Training Specialist)
- **Toy Story 3** (unreleased version) (Disney Circle 7 Studios feature film, 2004) (Training Specialist)

## Selected Gameography

- **Evolution**, North Star Games, 2019 (Art Director for the alpha version)
- **Magic: Duels Origins**, Wizards of the Coast, 2015 (Art Director)
- **Magic: Duels of the Planeswalkers 2015**, Wizards of the Coast, 2014 (Art Director)
- **Magic: Duels of the Planeswalkers 2014**, Wizards of the Coast, 2013 (Art Director)
- **Magic: Duels of the Planeswalkers 2013**, Wizards of the Coast, 2012 (Art Director)
- **Magic Online**, Wizards of the Coast, 2012-2015 (Art Director)
- **Dominus**, Pitch Black Games, 2010 (unreleased) (Animation Lead)
- **Damnation**, Blue Omega Entertainment, 2009 (Technical Animation and Effects)
- **Gamebryo** (game engine), Emergent Game Technologies, 2000-2004 (Lead Artist on demo minigames)

*References, Portfolio and Demo Reel are available upon request: [erik@erikvanhorn.com](mailto:erik@erikvanhorn.com)*