

Vaishak Purushothaman

Rigging/Pipeline Technical Director

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Summary

Computer graphics tool programmer and Character Rigging enthusiast with over 14 years of experience in feature animation and VFX production pipeline.

Employment

Head of Rigging - WildBrain Studios (Vancouver, Canada)

February 2023 to present

Role:

- Mentor a team of Rigging Supervisors and artists
 - Define and develop workflow, tools and best practices for the department.
 - Participate in Studio Senior Management sessions to offer thoughts and ideas to improve the quality of projects.
 - Collaborate with other Heads of Departments to ensure teams work together towards the company's vision.
 - Provide time bids for new projects
 - Interview and hire new people for the company.
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Lead Rigger(Character lab) - MPC Film (London, UK)

February 2022 to February 2023

Projects:

Transformers: Rise of the Beasts

Role:

- Leading a team of rigging artists in two locations, London and Montreal.
- Develop new rigging techniques/tools as required by the show.
- Bidding and making decisions to facilitate what is best for the show.
- Mentoring new joiners/artists in the team and training them up to studio standards.
- As a team leader in the Character Lab team, was involved in giving input on character designs and did early-stage tests before the characters were approved for the show.

Lead Rigger - Skydance Animation (Madrid, Spain)

January 2021 to January 2022

Projects:

Spellbound (Netflix Movie)

Role:

- Rigging characters/face
- Contributing to rig tech and workflow developments
- Debugging technical issues for the team
- Brought together the team to focus on the long-term goal and established a friendly open-minded work environment.

Senior Rigging Pipeline TD – Boulder Media (Dublin, Ireland)

November 2018 - November 2020

Projects:

- My Little Pony: A new generation (Netflix Movie)

Role:

Tool development for rigging workflow and pipeline integration.

Development highlights:

- Control picker - viewer and editor
 - An intuitive and user-friendly PySide based picker viewer and editor with features like referencing systems, attribute callbacks, scriptability, multiple shape controls, live testing controls, full undo support for all operations, live connection to Maya's scene hierarchy, etc
- Facial rig builder
 - A feature-rich GUI for facial rig builder to enable non-technical users to easily use the tool without having to worry about writing code for most things. Includes sub tools to export/import (versioned – helps to roll back to a different version for any object), control shapes, sculpts, guides, and additional attribute values.
 - Includes an RBF thin plate-based retargeting system for easily adapting guides for new characters based on reference characters. Uses numba vectorized functions to speed up the process (3 secs approximately).
- Corrective manager
 - Artist friendly (can be used by modelers or anyone who are not aware of rigging workflows) sculpt manager primarily intended for Facial sculpts.

- Designed in such a way that artists don't have to worry about how to mirror, clear, invert, or duplicate shapes. Everything is visually represented with a tree structure with simplified names, all shapes are assigned to control positions that can easily be set and reverted while sculpting.
 - Can be used as an independent tool for other sculpts. However, it can reap more benefits with facial sculpts since it is tightly integrated to the facial builder mentioned above
 - Variant manager
 - A tree hierarchy-based asset variant handling system to support variant model geometries, rig geometries, control poses, rig components.
 - The tree can be rearranged or stacked to have intuitive inheritance properties thus defining the parent-child relationship
 - Other tools and pipeline integration
 - Automatic publisher for multiple variants(includes face merger)
 - Calisthenic scene builders(integrates to shotgun)
 - Camera noise tools for layout artists with a custom plugin for seeded controllable noise.
 - And many more!
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Senior Rigging Artist – MPC Film (Bangaluru, India)

February 2018 to October 2018

Projects:

Ad Astra, Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, The Predator(2018), Voyage of Doctor Dolittle, Noelle

Role:

- Rigged all types of assets including digital doubles, FACS face setups, mechanical rigs
 - Added features to existing tools to simplify workflow.
 - Mentored juniors and mid-artists. Mostly MEL scripting
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Rigging Technical Director – Silver Ant (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

May 2016 to January 2018

Projects:

Commercials, pachinko games, undisclosed feature film

Role:

Rigged bipeds, birds, joint-based face rigs, etc.

Tool development for Rigging.

- GUI's for existing modular rigging tool
- PySide based picker viewer/editor.

Plug-in development for Maya using C++ / Python API

- Mesh constraints, locators, etc

Software development for building new pipeline and workflow

- Standalone tools like app launcher, shotgun media downloaders, etc

Rigging Technical Director – Sparky Animation (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Jun 2015 to Apr 2016

Projects:

Bill & Tony, Henry Huggle Monster, Dinosaur Train, Doc McStuffins

Role:

Rigging all types of assets (bipeds, quadrupeds, vehicles, creatures, etc)
Rigging Tool development

Rigging Artist – Toonz Animation India (Kerala, India)

Dec 2011 to May 2015

Projects:

The hero of Color City, Miraculous - Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir, Sherzade - The untold stories, Abominable Christmas, Sonic

Role:

Rigging all types of assets(bipeds, quadrupeds, birds, props, creatures, vehicles, other mechanical rigs)

Rigging tool development:

- Modified existing biped builder to add advanced spine and limbs
- Made a tool to handle corrective shape inversion, and driving those.
- And many other small tools to streamline rigging workflow

Skill sets

Software packages

Maya, 3dsMax, Zbrush, Adobe Software packages, Blender

Experience with Programming and related tools

Python, C++, MEL, Pyside/Qt, Numba, Git, Maya API (Python and C++), Shotgun API, MySQL, Sqlite, Mongo DB, Parallel processing, JIRA, Confluence

Education

**Advanced Diploma in Digital Arts and Animation - Toonz Academy
(Trivandrum, India)**

2010 - 2011