

BRIAN EMERSON'S CV

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EXPERIENCE I have 20+ years of experience in animation, VFX, previs, VR, realtime and research. My mind is always on “how can I streamline this process?” I love building systems to unblock creativity. Maya has been my main toolbox, however my focus of late has been developing artist and pipeline tools in Python. Before that it was technical art and character rigging and before that it was modeling, texturing, animation, lighting, rendering and compositing which I still do. I also have a lot of talented collaborators that I enjoy bringing into projects to fill key positions.

PROJECTS Currently, I’m an independent contractor working with great clients like [AlteredFX](#), [Embodied Labs](#) and [Mindshow](#). I really enjoy stretching myself artistically and technically, often simultaneously. I’m always looking for opportunities to work on projects that have a positive impact on individuals and society.

[AlteredFX](#) [1/2021 - present] Head of Pipeline

AFX is lean, fully remote, and fast paced. As such they need a powerful pipeline that’s intuitive and flexible. As its only developer, I have a lot of responsibility to keep it running smoothly and efficiently while continually improving workflows and interoperability. The majority of my work involves writing artist tools for Maya and Nuke and render farm tools for Deadline. Some examples include: a simple UI in QT5 used by most tools that enables artists to quickly get to any asset across all shows, and a customized deadline Submitter that’s much faster and simpler than the one provided by ThinkBox.

[MindShow](#) [1/2015 - 2/2020] Technical art Supervisor

I was lucky enough to be an early employee of a small and brilliant startup team building a VR app called Mindshow. It provided a full virtual production suite including sets, props, and characters. Anyone with a VR headset could make their own animated movies. As lead technical artist, I was responsible for making the art work with the tech. That involved a lot of prototyping and R&D in Maya and Unity and developing interoperability between them. I worked very closely with both artists and engineers. There were a lot of decisions to be made like what art style will work best with our tech limitations? How many bones? How do we animate the faces? Poly counts, texture resolutions? And how to scale up our art pipeline. Every day there was a new problem to solve. We had the rare opportunity to develop a style, sensibility and animated world from square one and I’m so proud of what we created.

[MindRide](#) [12/2014 - 2/2014] CG Supervisor

The PSA [Love Has No Labels](#) was a dream project because it championed a message I care deeply about and went crazy viral, creating more than a billion impressions and winning the Emmy for best commercial. I was responsible for creating the skeleton models, rigs, and shaders. I also built a pipeline to go from Xsens wireless mocap suits to maya rigs, and finally to real-time rendering on a giant LED screen all live in the field. It was quite an exciting challenge to execute on a short timeline.

[Funnerlabs](#) [9/2009 - 5/2014] Co-founder

Funnerlabs was an app development boutique with two good friends. Our first two apps

were based on my concepts, and I also created a lot of the art assets and marketing materials.

[AlienEquation](#) (iOS): A puzzle game for practicing elementary-level math.

[Slit-Scan Camera](#) (iOS): A photo app for recording experimental time-warped images.

[Star Math](#) (Android): A math fluency app for [Star Education](#), a nationwide afterschool program.

The Third Floor [11/2009 - 5/2013] Head Of Rigging/Technical Director

Men In Black III, Thor, Battleship, Minion Mayhem, Maleficent, X-Men, Godzilla, and many more. Considered to be the world's top Previs studio, I was lucky enough to hold many positions during my tenure, including technical director, show supervisor, and head of rigging - where I worked with the pipeline team supporting over 100 artists. I developed a new WYSIWYG auto face rig that provided faster, more intuitive, and better quality results, increasing efficiency and curing a lot of animator headaches. One of my favorite tasks was talking to artists to find their pain points and building tools and systems to make their work more intuitive.

Synthesian Studios [9/2008 - 7/2009] CG Supervisor

I led a lean, mean 3d team and did a lot of hands-on work designing and producing 3D elements in Maya and some compositing on over 30 VFX shots for Disney's *Surrogates*. I also helped develop a solution to rejuvenate Bruce Willis in over 100 shots.

Sprite Animation Studios [7/2005 - 6/2007] Modeler, Lighter, Character TD

[Monster Samurai](#), *Chicken Little TV pilot, Gon Featurette, Franklin B.C.*, and more.

After dreaming about working in the animation industry for 10 years, Sprite took a chance on me and gave me my first real gig. I loved their blocky and colorful style, and they were kind enough to let me evolve into different disciplines as my skills grew. I started off as a Maya character modeler, but also worked on lighting and animation. My invaluable supervisor, Ishii-san, taught me to rig and MEL script. It was here where I realized my true calling as a TD.

USC Institute for Creative Technologies: Graphics Lab [1/2000 - 5/2004] CG Supervisor

My first job out of college was for this high-tech think tank, where I got to work under Dr. Paul Debevec, the computer graphics pioneer behind many foundational technologies like Image Based Lighting, HDRI and the Light Stage. I supported, tested, and applied the current research and created the videos that accompanied Siggraph papers. This all culminated in going to the Acropolis in Greece to scan the Parthenon and supervising the production of [The Parthenon](#), a short film that played in the 2005 SIGGRAPH Electronic Theater and the Parthenon Museum.

SOFTWARE Maya, Python, After Effects, Photoshop, Premiere, Unity, Unreal, RedShift, Arnold, etc. I'm a quick study and enjoy learning new programs and workflows.

AWARDS Digital photography, 2008 - artist in resident, Anderson Ranch Arts Center
Shadow of a Drought, 1999 - Student Academy Award, IFC award, and more.
How a Volcano Works, 1987 - 1st place Overland Elementary Science Fair.

EDUCATION Graduated with honors from UC Santa Barbara - B.A. in Film Studies, 1999.

FUN FACTS I've been spending most of my free time creating videos about climate change with a group I'm helping start called [Climate ad Project](#). I love the outdoors and have done treks like the Annapurna Circuit in Nepal and the Laugavegur Trail in Iceland. I did stand up comedy once and can send a video if ask for it. This is starting to feel like a dating profile so I'll let you go. Thank you so much for your time!