Monika (Sawyer) Salter

GROOMING & SIMULATION ARTIST
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Grooming and CFX simulation artist with 20+ years of experience in Character FX including cloth and hair creation and simulation. Senior level skills in grooming fur, hair, and feathers as well as procedural environment elements such as grass, trees, and moss. Senior level skills in cloth and hair creation and simulation including simulation rig building and final shot completion and cleanup.

Work Experience

Full Professor of Instruction – Animation and Games Program   08/2017 - 05/2026
University of Texas at Dallas Bass School of Arts, Humanities and Technology

- Created six new undergraduate courses including Character FX and Surfacing and Shading
- Managed and directed an intermediate sized animation studio, offering collaborative experience and course credit to students to complete four award-winning short films for UTD's Animation Lab including *Octo Ninja*, *Bad Timing*, and *The Kraken's Tooth*.

Senior Character Groom and Simulation Artist   05/2023 - 08/2024
Premise Entertainment – Remote Freelance

- Projects include feature film pre-production (untitled).
- Collaborated with the Art team to create stylized character grooms and surface shaders in Unreal 5.
- Developed grooming workflows for both Maya's xGen and hair card grooming processes for UE5 integration.
- Researched simulation option in UE5 including in program simulations and plugin options such as uDraper.

Senior Groom Artist   06/2022 - 05/2023
Sunrise Animation Studios – Remote Freelance

- Projects include *Young David Miniseries* (2023-2024) and *David* (2025).
- Collaborated closely with CFX team to create the main lamb character, Tali, and a full flock of sheep grooms.
- Groomed an additional 21 human characters including secondary characters Old Potter and Mrs. Joash.

Lead Groom and Simulation Artist   06/2022 - 05/2023
ATK PLN Commercial Studio – Remote Freelance

- Projects include *Tazire* allergy medicine animated Commercial (2022).
- Created nine human character grooms in xGen including simulation prep for nCloth integration.
- Worked with VFX Supervisor to develop hair rigs for main female characters including Racecar Granny's hair animation rig and nHair simulation rigs. Completed hair simulations for all required shots.

Lead Groom and Look Development Artist   02/2021 - 09/2021
Brazen Animation – Remote Freelance

- Freelance projects include Addams Family 2 Marketing Packets, Progressive Insurance commercial (2022) and *Wednesday Addam's Nail Art* YouTube.com Tutorial (2021).
- Collaborated with the TD department to build a proprietary CFX pipeline for xGen and nCloth creation and simulation for their studio and created simulation rigs and completed shots for various projects.
- Translated character and environment shaders and grooms from client system to the studios proprietary system to match the client's look.

Lead Groom and CFX Artist   12/2019 - 02/2020
ATK PLN Studio - Freelance

- Projects include Paramount Animation Feature Film logo (2020) and *Arli and the World of Wonderful* commercial (2019).
- Worked with project Producers, VFX Supervisors, and Art Directors to create all characters grooms for both projects in Maya's xGen and prepped all grooms for simulation in Houdini.

CFX Groom and Simulation Supervisor   12/2011 - 08/2017
Reel FX Animation Studios – Staff

- Projects include *Scoob!* (2017), *Rock Dog* (2015), *Book of Life* (2014), and *Free Birds* (2013).
- Worked with creative team to create effective department workflows and pipeline integrations per project.
- Collaborated with the Tools team to develop a proprietary feathering system that was both efficient and artist friendly.
- Reviewed and approved artist's work, recruited team members, managed team schedules and deliveries alongside my coordinators and production managers.

Fur Technical Director   01/2006 - 12/2011
Blue Sky Studios – Staff

- Projects include *Epic (2013), Ice Age: Continental Drift (2013), Rio (2011), Scrat's Continental Crack Up (2011), Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009), Horton Hears a Who (2008), and Ice Age: The Meltdown (2006)*.
- Worked as a staff Fur Technical Director grooming humans, birds, animals and environments on feature films, marketing projects, short films and future development projects in their proprietary grooming programs.

Education

Savannah College of Art and Design- -MFA - Graduated 05/2004
Major: Computer Art

University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point - BA - Graduated 05/2000
Major: Communication Minor: Computer Science and German

Software Knowledge

Maya, xGen, nCloth, nHair, Arnold, Redshift, Unreal 5, Houdini Vellum, Houdini Fur, Houdini Karma, Substance Painter, Substance Designer, Substance Sampler, Adobe Photoshop, Marvelous Designer, Fiber Shop