

Monika (Sawyer) Salter

GROOMING & LOOK DEVELOPMENT ARTIST
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20+ years of experience in grooming for feature animated films with work including stylized human and animal hairstyles, feathers for a variety of birds, and procedural environment elements including grass, moss, and vines. Senior level skills look development of characters and environments Marvelous Designer cloth development and shader development for animals and humans in Arnold, Redshift, and Unreal Engine.

Work Experience

Full Professor of Instruction

Aug 2017- May 2026

University of Texas at Dallas
Bass School of Arts, Humanities and Technology
Animation and Games Program – Full-time Faculty

- Created new undergraduate courses in Character FX, Surfacing and Shading, and Animation and Games Fundamentals.
- 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 Studio including *Octo Ninja*, *Bad Timing*, and *The Kraken's Tooth*.
- Mentored highly motivated students in Independent Studies courses focused specifically on improving their skills in groom creating, character look development and cloth creation and simulation.

Character and Environment Look Development Artist

May 2025- May 2026

JM Animation LLC - Freelance
Mental animated short film (2027)

- Worked directly with the film Director to create a unique look for main Mom and Daughter characters in Maya, xGen, Arnold, and Substance Painter.
- Created procedural shaders to efficiently surface all living room and kitchen environment props and room.
- Collaborated with project's Rigging, Modeling, and Lighting team to incorporate pipeline ideas and fixes so that the project hit all required look requests and ran efficiently throughout the pipeline.

Senior Character Look Development Artist

May 2023- August 2024

Premise Entertainment - Freelance
Feature Film Pre-Production

- Collaborated with the Art team to create stylized character grooms and surface shaders in Unreal 5
- Researched and developed options for grooming processes and hair shading workflows for both Maya and UE5.
- Coordinated with Technical Development team to create artist-friendly procedural-based shaders for a stylized painterly look of film for clothing, hair and skin.

Senior Groom Artist

June 2022-May 2023

Sunrise Animation Studios - Freelance

Young David 5-part Miniseries (2023-2024)

David Feature Film (2025)

- Worked with the Art Director and Groom Lead to develop the look for Tali, the main lamb character.
- Collaborated closely with CFX team to create a full flock of sheep grooms including six variations of the four main body types, prepped and ready for fur simulation in Houdini.
- Groomed an additional 21 human characters including secondary characters Old Potter and Mrs. Joash.

Lead Groom and Simulation Artist

January 2022-April 2022

ATK PLN Commercial Studio – Freelance

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 simulation on all required shots.

Lead Groom and Look Development Artist

February 2021-September 2021

Brazen Animation – Freelance

Addams Family 2 Marketing Packets

Progressive Insurance animated commercial featuring the Addams family (2022)

Wednesday Addam's Nail Art Tutorial (2021)

- Collaborated with the TD department to build a proprietary CFX pipeline for xGen and nCloth creation and simulation for their studio.
- Translated character and environment shaders grooms from client system to the studios proprietary system to match the look of both the surfacing and grooms already established by the client.
- Created new materials in Maya/Arnold in the given style to cover new props and environments for various projects.

Environment Texture Artist

July 2020-August 2020

Cloud 10 Studio – Freelance

Rocket League 4K Cinematic Game Trailer (2021)

- Collaborated with client's Environment Supervisor to create high resolution textures, decals, and baked lighting effects for the stadium environment and props in Photoshop and Unreal Engine.

Senior Groom Artist

December 2019-February 2020

ATK PLN Studio – Freelance

Paramount Animation animated Feature Film logo (2020)

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.

CFX Groom and Simulation Supervisor

December 2011-August 2017

Reel FX Creative Studio – Full-time Staff

Scoob! - Development Supervisor (2017)

Rock Dog - CFX Supervisor (2015)

Book of Life - CFX Development Artist (2014)

Free Birds - Fur and Feathers Supervisor (2013)

- Worked with creative team to create effective department workflows and pipeline integrations per project.
- Developed simulation and groom processes per project to meet the diverse needs of each film.
- Reviewed and approved artist's work, recruited team members, managed team schedules and deliveries alongside my coordinators and production managers.

Fur Technical Director

January 2006-December 2011

Blue Sky Studio – Full-time Staff

Epic - Groom Technical Director (2013)

Ice Age: Continental Drift - Fur Environment Lead (2013)

Rio - Fur Technical Director (2011)

Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs - Fur Technical Director (2009)

Horton Hears a Who Junior Fur - Technical Director (2008)

Ice Age: The Meltdown - Lighting Technical Assistant (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.

Junior Texture and Shading Artist

December 2019-February 2020

EA Games – Full-time Staff

Superman Returns video game - Junior Shader Writer (2006)

NCAA Football video game – Junior Texture Artist (2006)

- Developed HLSL shaders for Superman's suit and the boss character, Metallo, for Superman Returns.
- Painted new texture maps for all score boards for NCAA teams, per a feature request from the gamers.

Education

Savannah College of Art and Design – MFA

2004

Major: Computer Arts

University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point - BA

2000

Major: Communication | Minor: Computer Science and German

Software Knowledge

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