

JASON STELLWAG

Senior Technical Artist (Characters)

Los Angeles, CA

www.cgguru.com | jason@cguru.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior Technical Artist specializing in character pipelines, deformation, simulation, and artist-facing tools across real-time and cinematic production. Extensive experience designing scalable pipeline systems using Python and C++, with hands-on experience supporting materials and rendering workflows in modern game engines.

EXPERIENCE

META - Senior Technical Artist (Characters)

Feb 2023 - Current (3 yrs)

Avatar Platform & Character Systems

- Architected and implemented a scalable character ingestion pipeline supporting parametric body rigs, modular wardrobe systems, and data-driven node networks.
- Led the design and rollout of USD-based avatar pipelines, converting legacy systems to OpenUSD to support large-scale content authoring and long-term maintainability.
- Owned performance profiling and optimization for Avatar 2.0, ensuring character rigs, deformation systems, and materials met runtime budgets on Quest 2 and Quest 3.

Content & Creator Enablement

- Technical lead for monthly Fantastic Avatar releases, delivering 100+ unique character variants including first-party designs and major IP partnerships.
- Designed and implemented lightweight joint-chain simulation systems enabling internal and UGC creators to author real-time secondary motion using simplified proxy inputs.
- Supported the integration of new material features including metals, emissives, stylized shading, and eye highlights, ensuring correct data ingestion, validation, and runtime behavior.

Tools & AI-Driven Pipelines

- Developed and extended C++ pipeline nodes using AI-assisted workflows to accelerate iteration while maintaining validation standards and long-term code quality.
- Designed and owned validation pipelines for AI-generated avatar data, establishing guardrails to prevent malformed assets and ensure pipeline stability.

MICROSOFT - Senior Technical Artist

Mar 2022 - Feb 2023 (1yr)

- Supported character avatar production for Microsoft Teams across Maya and Unity pipelines.
- Developed rigging and ingestion tools and led cloth and hair simulation system development for real-time avatars.
- Collaborated closely with engineering and art teams to ensure stable, performant character workflows.

WALT DISNEY ANIMATION STUDIOS - Tech Anim Supervisor / Senior Character TD (CFX)

Apr 2014 – Mar 2022 (8yrs)

- Technical Animation Supervisor on Encanto and Ralph Breaks the Internet; Senior Character TD on Frozen II, Raya and the Last Dragon, Zootopia, Moana and Big Hero 6.
- Provided technical leadership across a team of 49+ artists and TDs, defining character pipeline standards, tooling direction, and deformation workflows.
- Led department-wide adoption of USD as the core data representation, extending custom Python and C++ APIs to support complex character assets and multi-shot workflows.
- Designed and implemented a post-simulation wind deformation system, enabling art-directable wind effects without re-simulation; became a foundational production tool.

SELECT EARLY CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

SONY PICTURES IMAGEWORKS | Senior Technical Animation Artist / Rigging / Simulation

Jan 2009 - Apr 2014 (5 yrs 4 mos)

- Filmography Includes work on Amazing Spider-Man 1 & 2, OZ the Great and Powerful, Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 1 & 2, Alice in Wonderland, Green Lantern and Arthur Christmas
- Built complex muscle, skin, and cloth simulation rigs, including tearing cloth systems and creature deformation pipelines for Lizard creature in Amazing Spider-Man 1
- Developed the Spider-Man web pipeline for The Amazing Spider-Man 2, establishing efficient animation and tech-anim workflows across multiple shots.

LIGHTSTORM ENTERTAINMENT | Avatar - Layout & Motion Capture Artist

May 2007 - Jun 2008 (1 yr 2 mos)

- Worked on real-time performance capture and layout workflows at James Cameron's studio. Supported motion capture processing, camera iteration, and DP stereoscopic reviews on Avatar.

Additional Studios (2001 - 2007): **Digital Domain, ImageMovers Digital, Uncharted Territory, Image-Metrics, AsylumFX, TigarHare, DuckSoup, Super78**

- Roles spanning technical animation, simulation, rigging, and CG generalist work across feature film, tv/commercial and hybrid real-time projects.

SKILLS

Technical Focus: Character pipelines, deformation, cloth/hair/muscle systems, real-time character workflows, performance optimization, artist-facing tools

Programming: Python, C++, USD, Maya Api, AI Coding Tools, Shader and Material System Literacy

Tools & Engines: Maya, Unreal Engine 5, Unity, Substance Painter, ZBrush, Marvelous Designer

EDUCATION

FULL SAIL UNIVERSITY - Associate's Degree in Computer Science