





Grace Kumagai

Software Engineer

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Toronto, ON | Canadian Citizen 

Technical Experience

Software Engineer

Pixar Animation Studios – Emeryville, CA Apr 2021 – Feb 2025

- Designed, developed, and maintained C++ and Python tools and workflows for the Sets department in Maya, Presto and Houdini.
- Directed and implemented the integration of a Houdini-based vegetation toolkit into the asset pipeline.
- Led the adoption of maya-usd by collaborating with technical directors and Autodesk to test, report and prioritize blockers.

Lead Software Engineer

Blue Sky Studios – Greenwich, CT Mar 2020 – Apr 2021

- Led an Agile-Scrum team of 7 to integrate a new USD-centric, version-controlled pipeline for layout, stereo, and effects.
- Collaborated on the code for exporting data from Maya to USD and developed the UI for 20+ layout artists, ensuring stable and valid USD data for downstream departments.
- Defined the architecture for the USD camera pipeline, including reiterating to improve shot-based camera fixes.
- Prioritized and communicated cross-departmental workflows and roadmaps, presenting bi-weekly goals and accomplishments to key production stakeholders.
- Managed the software development cycle, including reviewing developers' code and providing feedback.

Software Engineer

Blue Sky Studios – Greenwich, CT Oct 2018 – Mar 2020

- Created and supported Rigging and Animation plugins for Maya in C++ and Python.
- Designed and developed a custom wire-driven skin cluster deformer for facial and spine rigs.
- Collaborated with artists and Autodesk to improve rig performance and isolate bugs in Maya's evaluation manager.

Research & Development Intern

Blue Sky Studios – Greenwich, CT Jun 2018 – Aug 2018

- Designed a machine learning framework to estimate the render time of upcoming feature films, where the training data was defined by the scenes' complexity.

3D Programming Intern

Ubisoft Toronto – Toronto, ON May 2017 – Aug 2017

- Implemented C++ features to improve the visuals and creative control in the 3D game universe of *Starlink: Battle for Atlas*.
- Improved existing 3D functions in the engine.

Education

BASc, Engineering Science

University of Toronto Sept 2014 – May 2018

- Specialization: Robotics | cGPA: 3.62
- Dean's List | Graduated with Honours

Publications

Fabrication, Modeling, and Control of Plush Robots

IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems 2017

Awards

First in Class

CSC418: Computer Graphics

Achieved the highest grade in Uoft's CSC418 Introduction to Computer Graphics with 100%.

Engineering Science Exceptional Opportunity Award

Awarded a grant to pursue a research opportunity at Carnegie Mellon University.

University of Toronto's President's Scholar of Excellence

Awarded to 50 of the most highly qualified students applying to first year.

Community

- Co-Lead for Pixar's Women in Technology (PixWIT) Employee Resource Group from 2022-2025.
- SIGGRAPH Electronic Theater Triage Reviewer from 2023-2026.
- Mentored a summer R&D intern at Pixar in 2022. Designed and oversaw Blue Sky's Technology Internships in 2020, and mentored in 2019 and 2020.
- SIGGRAPH Student Volunteer in 2017 and panelist for Student Volunteers in 2020.

Skills & Interests

C++, Python, C, PyQt, USD, HLSL/GLSL
Maya, Houdini, Presto, Godot, Matlab, Git
Fiber Artist, Musical Watcher, Softball Player