Tobias Hollerer

1. Tell me about yourself

I live in Beijing and stayed here till the end of the high school, and I went to Pomona College in California for undergraduate education. It’s a small liberal arts college east from LA for a couple of miles. Really liked the experience there.

I’ve always had a strong interest in visual arts. At the beginning of the college, I was a film studies major. I also made quite a few short videos in high school and college, some of which won awards.

But later on, I realized that technology played a huge part in the development of films. When I went to SIGGRAPH 2019 in LA, I found research was really cool, and I realized that there were so many exciting possibilities that still remain uncovered. So, I decided to become a researcher in technologies related to visual arts.

In the past two years, I gained knowledge in computer vision, computer graphics and machine learning, as well as math. Research wise, I did projects in facial recognition, neural rendering, HCI, and a survey thesis on computer graphics. I explored the topics widely because I want to have a better idea of what each field of research looks like before I commit into one of them and later on find I don’t like it.

At this moment, I find I have a great interest in any aspect in AR and VR. How to generate or capture better images and how to utilize it to make something that can benefit users the most. That is why I applied to your lab, which has a diverse project pool on vision and HCI.

2. Tell me about the XXX research project you did. (See slides)

3. You career plan during / after PhD?

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I will first join some big companies like Google, Adobe or even NVIDEA, as a visual researcher, to further broaden my sights in the field and generate some directly applicable works. After that, I wish to develop the next generation of technology for visual art. So, I have mainly two plans: first, I could be a professor like you, in a university with both good art department and technology department, such as NYU, USC, etc. Second, I could start a company making next-generation special effects, or sth like a Pixar, which makes movies and develops technology. Ideally, I can do both. We’ll see. Who knows what will happen in the next decade.

4. Why do you want to do a PhD?

I want to help develop or even lead the technology for next generation of digital art, and that is no easy task. One really needs to know what’s going on in the academia and the industry right now, how to ask the right questions, what can be solved and what cannot be solved even when you don’t know the solutions, how to solve the problems and how to solve problems in a team. All these are hardcore-practiced in a PhD. But most importantly, I know I want to study this subject, and I think I will enjoy the next 5 or 6 years.

5. Questions for me?

Could you give me an introduction on your four eyes lab and what is your research plan in the future?

What is your working mode? Is it more hands-on or hands-off? Do you plan to give me specific projects, or just guide me in high level directions?

How is UCSB PhD in general? Do you have collaborations with companies? How’s funding in recent years?

What is your expectation for a graduating PhD?

怎么能毕业？对毕业的期望？你对学生的产出期望？（是必须要best paper还是怎样）

*Do you have RAship? Or are there more TA in general?*

How many PhD students do you plan to have in this year?