

MIKE SAFIANOFF

Senior / Lead Character Animator

mikesaf.com

EXPERIENCE

Double Fine — Character Animator

Mar 2025 – Present | Remote

NPC creature animation on *Keeper*, designing interactive behaviors between NPCs, the player, and environment. Created scripted moments, motion cycles, emote suites, and cinematic performances. Worked in Unreal 5 and Maya, collaborating closely with engineering and the animation supervisor to implement and refine new animation systems.

Meta — Lead Animator

Jun 2022 – Apr 2025 | Remote

Drove animation quality for Meta's VR open world and pre-rendered avatar content. Co-developed a FACS-based facial rig balancing stylized expression with tracking fidelity across multiple hardware tiers. Partnered with engineering to scale expressive, controllable animation authoring. Led avatar sticker overhaul, doubling user engagement. Defined a new animation style and authored the Meta Avatars style guide. Collaborated with AI and SDK teams to enhance viseme-driven speech, face tracking, and performance consistency.

Steamroller Studios — Animation Supervisor

Jul 2021 – Jun 2022 | Remote

Supervised animation teams in partnership with Framestore and DNEG. Provided creative direction, quality oversight, and technical troubleshooting. Trained and mentored animators, helping several advance into lead roles.

Blue Sky Studios — Character Animator

May 2015 – Apr 2021 | Greenwich, CT

Performance animator on *Nimona*, *Spies in Disguise*, *Ferdinand*, and *Ice Age: Collision Course*. Collaborated with rigging and technology teams to develop next-generation animation workflows and tools.

CGTarian — Animation Instructor

Apr 2014 – Dec 2017 | Remote

Authored 20+ hours of advanced animation lectures covering acting, appeal, and facial performance. Mentored professional animators to elevate storytelling and polish.

Tippett Studio — Character Animator

Feb 2015 – May 2015 | Berkeley, CA

Animated hybrid mocap/keyframe performances for *Ted 2*.

DreamWorks Animation — Character Animator

May 2010 – Feb 2015 | Glendale, CA

Created narrative-driven performances for *Puss in Boots*, *Madagascar 3*, *Turbo*, *Peabody & Sherman*, *How to Train Your Dragon 2*, *Penguins of Madagascar*, and *Home*. Collaborated closely with directors and supervisors to meet artistic and technical standards.

iAnimate.net — Animation Instructor

Jan 2011 – Sep 2013 | Remote

Taught beginner to advanced character animation courses. Delivered weekly lectures and critiques to accelerate student growth.

Industrial Light & Magic — Character Animator

Nov 2009 – Feb 2010 | San Francisco, CA

Animated Iron Man and flight sequences for *Iron Man 2*, blending mocap and keyframe work.

Tippett Studio — Character Animator

Mar 2009 – Oct 2009 | Berkeley, CA

Created realistic quadruped and bird animation for *Cats & Dogs 2*.

2K Games — Character Animator

Sep 2008 – Mar 2009 | Novato, CA

Produced nearly all first-person hand and weapon animations for *BioShock 2*. Worked closely with design and engineering for responsive, high-quality motion.

Expression College (SAE) — Professor of Computer Animation

Oct 2007 – Dec 2008 | Emeryville, CA

Taught 3D animation with Maya and guided final thesis projects, emphasizing cinematic performance and refinement.

Reel FX – Character Animator

Feb 2008 – Jun 2008 | Remote

Animated on *Open Season 2* with a 6-second-per-week production quota.

Tippett Studio – Character Animator

Apr 2007 – Sep 2007 | Berkeley, CA

Animated creatures and goblins for *The Spiderwick Chronicles* and *Cats & Dogs 2*.

EA Tiburon – Associate Character Animator

Aug 2005 – Nov 2006 | Orlando, FL

Animated gameplay and cinematic sequences for *Superman Returns: The Video Game*.