

RYAN OLSON

Animation Lead · Artist Manager · Animation Director

Available for remote, hybrid, and relocation opportunities.

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I got into animation because of how it feels to watch something move with genuine illusion of life. I've stayed because of the great people I've encountered, the team members I'm so proud of, and the thrill of building a project to scale, on budget, and at a quality that makes a difference. Over eighteen years, I've touched almost every rung of the ladder - from render wrangler to animator, animator to the manager of illustration & animation, to animation lead and animation director. Most recently, I've been applying my technical and production problem-solving capabilities leading the crowd systems for Apple TV+ and Netflix productions at ICON Creative Studio. I'm seeking Animation Lead, Animation Director, and Artist Manager roles at studios that dare to tell stories worth telling, with people who hold the work to an uncompromising standard.

SKILLS & STRENGTHS

- Animation Direction
- Stakeholder Management
- Maya
- Artist Management
- Workflow Optimization
- Toon Boom Harmony
- Crowd Systems & Pipeline
- Scope & Scheduling
- ShotGrid / Flow Production
- Continuous Learning Through Curiosity
- Cross-studio Collaboration
- 2D & 3D Animation | Illustration

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Built and scaled the Disney Club Penguin art department from 9 artists to 28, developing 4 art leads and delivering work approved by Disney Animation, Pixar, The Muppets, and Marvel - weekly, for nearly a decade.
- Redesigned Club Penguin's character, environment, and item guidelines to push greater aspiration into the art style, rolling standards out across studios in Kelowna and Glendale, CA.
- Created crowd documentation and pipeline guidelines at ICON Creative Studio that remain in active use today, and continue driving innovation in the proprietary crowds system on return.
- Developed a relational dailies culture at Kickstart Entertainment - reviewing work live with artists and talking through the thinking - that built a strong feedback culture and tighter team cohesion.
- Reduced overseas revision cycles at Kickstart by building pre-production style and quality documentation before animation began, resulting in teams delivering on-standard work from day one.
- Mentored animators throughout my career through detailed draw-overs, notations, and lunch & learns - many of whom have since grown into senior artists and leads at studios across the industry.

EXPERIENCE

ICON CREATIVE STUDIO

2023 - 2024 | 2026 - Present

Rejoined after a two-year tenure at Kickstart Entertainment

Lead Animator

- Returning to ICON in a lead capacity, currently owning the crowd pipeline on an unannounced Netflix series - building end-to-end delivery workflow, improving proprietary tools, and establishing scalable systems for high-volume production.
- WondLa (Apple TV+ / Skydance Animation) - Led all crowd animation across three full seasons; scoped, scheduled, and supervised crowd builds reaching 500 characters per shot. Directed retakes on the first three episodes and collaborated across Shot Finaling, Lighting, and Compositing under fast-paced conditions.
- Lead Dev Animator on an unreleased Netflix feature-quality series in pre-production, building character cycles and proof-of-concept animation for a highly stylized pipeline.

EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

KICKSTART ENTERTAINMENT

2024 - 2026

Animation Supervisor / Director

- Star Trek: Scouts - Directed character performance across in-house and overseas teams. Set performance standards early, tightened cross-studio communication, and drove down late-stage revisions while protecting the tone of the Star Trek universe.
- Barney's World (Season 2) - Animation Director leading a 12-person in-house team alongside overseas collaboration. Delivered the season on schedule while pushing expression and acting clarity for a preschool audience.

YETI FARM CREATIVE

2016 - 2023

Director / Animation Director / Supervisor

- Hotel Transylvania (Season 2) - Elevated animation quality to a level that drew direct commendation from Sony executives, resulting in a promotion to Animation Director.
 - Pete the Cat (Season 2) - Directed animation across a song-based episodic series, sharpening storytelling and character depth through detailed scene notation.
 - Sweet Tweets (Season 2) - Series Director leading a 13-person team of designers, storyboard artists, animators, and editorial. Delivered under budget.
 - Alpha Betas - Animation Director on a series that reached 8 million views on YouTube.
- Also: Skookum & Chums (Director, pilot), DNAce, Mysticons, Ready Jet Go, Summer Memories

THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

2007 - 2016

Manager, Illustration & Animation | Lead Animator

- Grew the Disney Club Penguin art department from 9 artists to 28, with 4 art leads, over nine years - delivering weekly 2D and 3D content to 200 million active players on the number one virtual world for kids.
- Led the art team through creative partnerships with Marvel, Star Wars, Pixar, and Walt Disney Animation Studios.
- Oversaw a full rebrand of Club Penguin's characters and environments, drove art guideline development across both studios, and built a training program for mobile production.
- Created the animation and personality for the Yellow Puffle. Contributed to Aqua Grabber, Card Jitsu, Dance Contest, and others.

EDUCATION

CENTER FOR ARTS & TECHNOLOGY

2003 - 2004

Diploma, Animation & Visual Effects

ANIMSQUAD

Expert Character Animation Workshop (12 weeks) · 2020

Expert Character Animation Workshop (12 weeks) · 2015

Intermediate Character Animation Workshop (12 weeks) · 2014