Ken Faiman

Senior / Lead / Principal Technical Artist · Character & Simulation Specialist

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Demo Reel: faiman.com · **Portfolio:** Rigging / sim / modular build breakdown

SUMMARY

Technical Artist with 25 years on character and simulation: rigging, cloth/hair/skin simulation, facial and performance capture, deformation, and the avatar/character pipelines that ship them. Facial capture on *The Matrix* films, a decade of character FX at DreamWorks, seven years leading rigging and simulation on Blizzard cinematics, and real-time avatar systems at Meta Reality Labs. Most recently built and maintained real-time avatar rigging and animation systems and created the universal hair rig at Meta (Meta Avatars / Horizon), training the rigging team behind 200+ hairstyles. Member, The Animation Guild (IATSE TAG Local 839).

CORE COMPETENCIES

Character rigging, cloth / hair / skin / feather simulation, grooming (hair/fur), facial and performance capture, deformers / skinning / blendshapes, LODs, real-time rigging and animation systems, node/graph ("blueprint") avatar logic, modular avatar/character pipelines, USD / asset pipelines, pipeline automation and validation, Python tooling, cross-discipline leadership and enablement

EXPERIENCE

Meta - Reality Labs · Senior Technical Artist (IC5), Avatar Rigging & Simulation · 2022–2026

Character and avatar systems for Meta Avatars and Horizon — a shipped real-time VR/mobile avatar platform.

- Built, maintained, and supported many of the real-time rigging and animation systems for avatars within a production real-time game engine.
- Created the universal hair rig used across all avatar animation and simulation, and built the grooming/authoring pipeline behind it.
- Trained and supervised a team of 10+ rigging artists to author rigs for 200+ dynamic hairstyles.
- Built node/graph ("blueprint"-style) systems for the parametric avatar backend and for clothing-rig automation.
- Built runtime hair motion, geometric deformers, LODs, and mix-and-match modular asset integration.
- Rated "Exceeded Expectations" in the most recent year-end review for technical contributions and leadership.

Blizzard Entertainment - Cinematics · Senior Rigging & Simulation Artist II (Lead) · 2015–2022

Rigging and simulation lead across World of Warcraft, Overwatch, Diablo, Heroes of the Storm, and Hearthstone cinematics.

- Built the nCloth/nHair simulation methodology, tools, and pipeline used across five franchises.
- Architected modular, graph-based build components (Python rig modules) deployed across all cinematic pipelines.
- Owned shot simulation on 25+ cinematics across five franchises, from functional setup through production-final.

DreamWorks Animation · Character Effects Artist / Senior Cloth Developer · 2005–2015

Character FX (cloth, hair, skin) on hero characters across eight feature films.

- Hero-character cloth, hair, and skin on *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Puss in Boots*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Bee Movie*, *Over the Hedge*, *Turbo*, *Penguins of Madagascar*, and *Home*.
- Pioneered cloth-based skin solvers for hero characters (e.g. Stoick in *How to Train Your Dragon*, Puss in Boots).

Rhythm & Hues Studios · Motion Capture TD / VFX Motion Editor · 2004–2005

- Visual-effects motion editing on *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

ESC Entertainment · Facial Capture / FX Technical Director · 2002–2004

Universal Capture facial system for the Matrix films.

- Facial rigging, sculpting, match-move, texture projection, and compositing on the Universal Capture facial system for *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*; also *Catwoman* and *The Ladykillers*.

- Part of the team behind the award-winning Universal Capture facial system (Academy Sci-Tech / VES recognition, team award). SIGGRAPH 2004 talk: "Making of The Superpunch."

Earlier: Activision · 3D Game Artist (2000).

SKILLS

- **Disciplines:** Character rigging, cloth/hair/skin/feather simulation, grooming, facial and performance capture, deformation (skinning, blendshapes, geometric deformers), avatar/character pipelines, pipeline automation, look-dev
- **Code:** Python, OpenMaya API, MEL, C++ (modern C++17), C#
- **DCC / Tools:** Maya, Houdini, USD/OpenUSD, VS Code
- **Engines / Real-time:** Production real-time game-engine systems (real-time rigging and animation systems, node/graph "blueprint" avatar logic, clothing-rig automation, universal hair rig, runtime hair motion, deformers, LODs, modular asset integration), Unity (soft-body dynamics game development), Unreal Engine (Blueprint + MCP integration), Maya node-graph workflows
- **AI / ML:** Agentic AI frameworks and custom agent tooling (Claude Code, OpenClaw), MCP/RAG, multi-agent orchestration, Unreal MCP, genAI asset CI (validation / USD conversion / compliance), AI enablement and TA training

SELECTED CREDITS

- **Feature VFX:** The Matrix Reloaded, The Matrix Revolutions (2003) · Catwoman, The Ladykillers (2004) · Narnia: LWW (2005)
- **Feature animation (DreamWorks):** Over the Hedge, Bee Movie, Kung Fu Panda, How to Train Your Dragon, Puss in Boots, Turbo, Penguins of Madagascar, Home (2006–2015)
- **Games cinematics (Blizzard):** World of Warcraft, Overwatch, Diablo, Heroes of the Storm, Hearthstone (2015–2022)
- **VR:** avatar/character systems for Meta Avatars and Horizon at Meta Reality Labs (2022–2026)

PIPELINE & TOOLING DIFFERENTIATOR

A character/simulation TA who also builds the production tooling the art team adopts.

- **Asset-pipeline tooling (C++):** Built a thread-optimized C++ library converting FBX to engine-compliant USD with full validation and automatic non-compliance fixing, shipped as both a CLI and a CI-pipeline node, running across 100,000s of vendor and genAI assets.
- Built a fully multi-threaded, CPU-based **HdStorm + Vulkan** system in **OpenUSD** for direct **PBR renders** on devservers — **10k USD assets per batch**, headless and at scale.
- **Agentic AI tooling:** Built custom agent frameworks (Claude Code) and trained Technical Artists to adopt agentic workflows in production; personal R&D in multi-agent orchestration, MCP/GPU-RAG (**mainframe-mcp**, open source — github.com/sushiHex), and diffusion fine-tuning (LoRA on FLUX), all with tests and CI.

EDUCATION

- **UCLA** — B.A., Film, Television & Animation
- **Gnomon School of Visual Effects** — Maya