

Ben Bays

Artist

Animator

Educator

Flaneur

Raconteur

Braggart

&

Poseur

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Summary

Educator. Full time Faculty and Animation Area Head in the Department of Radio Television Film, Moody College of Communication, The University of Texas at Austin. Concurrently adjunct faculty in the School of Theater Dance and Film at Texas State University. Previously faculty and advisory council in the Game Development Program at ACC. Various other appointments, workshops and presentations worldwide.

Drawing, painting, animating and rendering worlds, effects and performances across the full spectrum of modes and platforms. My background is illustration and comics, I have professional experience in traditional hand drawn animation, video game development, interactive VR/AR/XR and visual effects for film.

Education

Certificate in Filmmaking, Austin Film Works, 1990

Roadie for Jerry Jeff Walker, 1992

Austin High School 1992

Hermitage in Anandavadi, Kerala, India 1994

B.A. Studio Art (Illustration), College of Fine Arts, the University of Texas at Austin, 1998

Pilgrimage through cultural centers of Comics and Cartoons of Europe, 2023

Employment History

Associate Professor of Instruction

2008-present

University of Texas

Moody College of Communication

Department of Radio Television and Film

- Animation/Digital Area Head for RTF
 - Dedicated to creating interdisciplinary **partnerships** within (and outside) the University, **bridging** education and industry and **enhancing** the reputation of RTF and The University of Texas locally, nationally and abroad.
- Experience **teaching** production courses of many shapes and sizes in digital media, animation, visual effects and interactive
 - **Comics and Cartoons** - practice, theory, history, technology, censorship, cultural spaces
 - **Video Games** - engines, types of, theory and history, writing, audio, modeling, painting, animation, puzzles, narrative design, play
 - **Digital Media Production** (online asynchronous 250+ students)
 - **Visual Effects** and its various components
 - Motion Capture
 - Virtual Production
 - **CGI** for film, video games and everything else - modeling, surfacing, cameras and lighting, rendering and real time
 - **3D Animation** - rigging, skinning, walks, lip synch, storytelling, theory of and general appreciation
 - **2D Animation** - real and digital, stop motion, drawn, character, effects, layout, storytelling, theory, history, enthusiasm for
 - **Cross-Disciplinary** and Collaborative Courses
 - BDP 101: Exploring Digital Arts and Media
 - foundational course for the Bridging Disciplines Program Digital Arts and Media Certificate program (non RTF majors)
 - Enron Raptor Course - in collaboration with the Department of Theater and Dance; Karen Maness and J.E. Johnston
 - Practical Special Effects — Prototyping and Rapid Fabrication for Entertainment-in collaboration with The Department of Theater and Dance, The Cockerell School of Engineering and the Arts and Entertainment Technology Division of the College of Fine Arts
- Organize **events** and symposia throughout the year
 - RTF Gaming Symposium

- RTF Animation Celebration
- RTF Block Party

Adjunct Professor in Film Production
Texas State University
School of Theater Dance and Film

2021-

- Joined the Department of Theater and Dance as a lecturer in their nascent film concentration a few years ago. **Visual Effects**. Film concentration a hit, becomes a major, department gets renamed, course offered year round (and waitlisted). TXST has an excellent virtual production facility.

previously...

Faculty

2010-2017

Game Art Area

Game Development, Animation and Motion Graphics Department
Austin Community College

- *Adjunct Professor* in the Game Development, Animation and Motion Graphics area for over 6 years
- Developed templates, presentations, rubrics and curriculum for face to face and hybrid online courses in Game Art
- Advised development of program/curriculum + participated in portfolio reviews
- **Instructor of Record**
 - 2D GAME ART
 - Sprites, GUI, 2.5 Platformers, Shooting Galleries
 - 3D GAME ART
 - 3D MODELING AND RENDERING I
 - 3D MODELING AND RENDERING II
 - 3D SURFACING AND LIGHTING

In-World Composite Director (*of a Virtual World*)

2009 - 2015

Videoranch

- Supervised on set + virtual production design compositing live audio and video broadcast into an online multiplayer virtual world
 - Oversaw creation and management of large scale virtual environments, models, textures, animation and associated digital assets
 - Live Events required custom models/textures/animations/links with

- same day turnaround, implemented in world in real time
- In World Live Event coordinator
 - 20k+ concurrent international users SXSW 2012

Lead Artist (*at a video game studio*)

2006 – 2009

Amaze Entertainment

- Lead artists through several games and prototypes based on both original and licensed IP.
- Active in the design and production of all visual assets of a videogame including splash screens and menus, maps, icons and GUI elements, particles, props, levels, characters and bosses, animation, box art, manual, merchandise, promotional images, advertising and just all around swag.
- Targeted and successfully delivered multiple titles for a variety of platforms including mobile, handheld and console.
- Experience budgeting, staffing, scheduling, outsourcing, research and development, pitch concept and bible development, marketing materials, QA database management, standards and localization.

Environment Artist (*for a video game studio*)

2006 – 2009

Fizz Factor/F9

- Created dozens of levels, worlds and virtual environments for original and licensed IP for GBA (Game Boy Advance), Gameboy DS and Wii platforms
- Highlights include
 - Isometric and top down digital painted levels
 - 2.5D side scrollers
 - Tile based orthographic projections
 - Camera mapping
 - Pre-rendered
 - 3D levels
 - implementation of path based curvilinear camera animation in a traditional side scroller
 - utilizing novel stencil and buffer effects as artistic/gameplay element,
 - utilizing dual cameras: a perspective and an orthographic to clarify and enhance gameplay experience
 - conceiving and implementing system of rotating interchangeable tiles and developing image and camera projection techniques for use in mobile and handheld
- Reflection of my time in this role: developed flexibility adapting process and results across genres and styles from realistic to stylized to abstract. Design and art approach for audiences from children up to mature.

Animation/Background Artist (on an animated feature film)
– 2005

2004

Detour Productions, Austin, TX

***A Scanner Darkly*. Dir. Richard Linklater**

- Animator and Background Artist on “*A Scanner Darkly*”, an animated motion picture adapted from a Philip K. Dick novel.
- Experience delivering high quality frame by frame animation and advanced vector based painting
- Innovation and leadership enhancing modern rotoscoping techniques to include manual/optical tracking, corner pin distortions, Boolean intersections, shape morphing, bezier spline and stroke based animation techniques. Collaborated directly with Bob Sabiston to alter/update proprietary animation software.

Concept Artist/Environment Artist/Lead Environment Artist **2001 – 2004**

Acclaim Studios

- Contributed a broad spectrum of art for AAA console games.
- Illustrated concept art for flora, props, environments, puzzles, arenas, vehicles, weapons, bosses, characters and creatures. Developed textural look, typefaces, alternate alphabets and iconography of several fictional game worlds. Assets used throughout production: for internal use, in-game, throughout the manual, box art and all promotional materials.
- Created dozens of environments including but not limited to: tutorial levels, crypts, caves, platforming areas, shops, climbing levels, airlocks and elevator loads, boss fights, hidden rooms, reflection puzzles, arenas, ghost ships, waterfalls, tree top villages, desert ruins, alternate dimensions, dreamscapes, erupting volcanoes, busy casinos, burning warehouses, apartments, car, train and helicopter rides, urban rooftop and street level exteriors and destructible environments
- Solved transparency, memory, camera and framerate woes that could possibly happen during previous bullet point. I have personally resolved every bug and finished every level I have ever started.
- Responsible for previsualization, layout, visual effects, rendering, compositing, editing and finishing of cinematics used in game. For promotional videos/trailers add accompanying titles, motion graphics and particles/visual flourishes.
- Worked as a technical artist organizing, reducing, retopologizing, palletizing and compressing thousands of assets on multiple skus: XBOX, Playstation 2 and Gamecube.
- Went from no experience to leading teams of 5+ environment artists in 3 years.

Animation Department
Swerve Pictures

2000 – 2001

Trip to Roswell. Dir. Geoff Marslett

- Hand animated several characters, including the villain-Dr. Fortunato. Layout and background painting. Created and animated a completely CG character some vehicles and environmental props, then rendered and composited them against the hand drawn animated characters and backgrounds.

Published Creative Work

Independent and Freelance

- Animator and Motion Designer, *Floodwise Communities*, 2021. CGI : modeled, lit, animated and rendered a mid sized gulf coast community under a variety of projected climate scenarios (sea level rise, failing infrastructure, extreme weather conditions)
- VR Art Gallery App, *Art Virtually*: CGI : modeled, surfaced and lit high end Virtual Art Gallery environment for virtual marketplace. Baked lighting, added effects, implemented controlled camera and implemented in interactive VR for client. Created complementary GUI elements. Consulted on design and manufacture of custom VR hardware to accompany app.
- Title Sequence, *Mars (feature film)*: designed, illustrated, digitized and animated pen and ink drawings for use in opening title sequence
- Artist and designer for an Augmented Reality Project and image recognition (physical postcards). Created both the physical, printed material and the accompanying Augmented Reality content.
- Concept Artist *Twilight Story/ Knightmayor*. Rendered early environmental concept and established of shape/color/texture language for a Dungeons and Dragons fantasy game currently in development.
- Independent Animator on a variety of feature and short films, interstitials, promos and commercials. Work shown on PBS, HBO, Univision, Adult Swim and available on a variety of online outlets and streaming services and over 25 festivals worldwide.

Games and Interactive:

- Acclaim Studios. *Vexx*. Acclaim Entertainment, 2003. Xbox.
- Acclaim Studios. *Vexx*. Acclaim Entertainment, 2003. PS2.
- Acclaim Studios. *Vexx*. Acclaim Entertainment, 2003. Gamecube.
- Acclaim Studios. *100 Bullets*. Acclaim Entertainment/Unreleased, 2004. XBOX
- Amaze Entertainment, Inc. *The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning*. Sierra Entertainment, 2006. Nintendo DS.

- Amaze Entertainment, Inc. *The Legend of Spyro: Eternal Night*. Sierra Entertainment, 2007. Nintendo DS.
- Amaze Entertainment, Inc. *Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts!* Activision Publishing, Inc., 2006. Nintendo DS.
- Amaze Entertainment, Inc. *Wizards of Waverly Place*. Unreleased, 2007. Nintendo DS.
- Amaze Entertainment, Inc. *WWE SmackDown vs. Raw*. THQ, 2007. Nintendo DS
- Amaze Entertainment, Inc. *The Incredible Hulk*. SEGA of America, Inc., 2008. Nintendo DS.
- Fizz Factor. *The Tale of Despereaux*. Atari, 2008. Nintendo DS.
- Fizz Factor. *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian The Video Game*. Majesco Entertainment Company, 2009. Nintendo DS.
- Griptonite, Inc. *Assassin's Creed II: Discovery*. Ubisoft, Inc., 2009. Nintendo DS.
- Double Helix Games. *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra*. Electronic Arts, 2009. PSP.
- Trash Dance. *Trash dance Interactive Project*. Andrew Garrison, 2011. Installation/Kinect

Film:

- *A Scanner Darkly*. Dir. Richard Linklater. Perf. Keanu Reeves, Robert Downey, Jr., Woody Harrelson and Winona Ryder. Warner Independent Pictures, 2006.
- *Mars*. Dir. Geoff Marslett. Perf. Mark Duplass, Zoë Simpson Dean and Paul Gordon. Devolver Digital Films, 2013
- *Hard Reset*. Dir. Deepak Chetty. Perf. Oryan Landa, Josephine McAdam and Holt Boggs. 2016. DVD.
- *Middle Witch*. Dir. Amanda Gotera. Perf. Paulet Del Castillo, Alessandra Manon and Paeka Campos. 2015. DVD.
- *The 11th Order*. Dir. Joshua Defour. Perf. Michael Grant, Noah Gray-Cabey, Colin Hofmeister. 2019

Television and Web Series:

- *The Ted Zone, Episode 1: The Butterfly Effect*. The Ted Zone. Dir and prod., Lance Myers. Adult Swim. 2007
- *The Ted Zone, Episode 2: People of Earth*. The Ted Zone. Dir and prod., Lance Myers. Adult Swim. 2007
- *The Ted Zone, Episode 3: The Belittling*. The Ted Zone. Dir and prod., Lance Myers. Adult Swim. 2007
- *The Ted Zone, Episode 6: Ted's Dead*. The Ted Zone. Dir and prod., Lance Myers. Adult Swim. 2007
- *I Exist*. Dir. Francesca Talenti. PBS
- *You Have my Deepest Sympathy*. Dir. Francesca Talenti. PBS
- *Life Jacket*. Dir. Francesca Talenti. PBS

- *On Writing Hat Poems*. Dir. Francesca Talenti. PBS

Engagements, Appearances and Events

- Nov 2024, Invited Speaker, Mittweida Medienforum”, “Subverting Cinematic Momentum.”, Mittweida, Germany
- Oct 2024, Organized RTF Gaming Symposium, Austin, TX
- Oct, 2024, Invited Presenter UT OLLI Open House, “Drawing for Visual Effects”
- May 2024, Guest Artist, Filmmaking Abroad : Acting and Directing Global Seminar, Edinburgh, Scotland
- May 2024, Organized RTF Block Party 2024
 - collaboration between RTF department, KVRX student radio and TSTV Texas Student Television
- Organized Animation Celebration 2024
- Organized Moody Esports Symposium (and Video Game Tournament) 2023
- March 2022, Speaker, “Speedrun : A (not so) Brief History of Virtual Worlds”, GDC2
- March 2022, Speaker and RTF representative “Moody Recruitment Event”, Moody College of Communications
- February 2022, Guest Lecture “Aesthetics of Virtual Worlds”, ICC program, Stan Richards School of Advertising and Public Relations
- November 2021, Keynote Speaker, “Emergent Cinematic Arts” COM 301E Intro To Communications Foundations, Moody College of Communication
- March 2021, MODD “Introduction to Game Design”, Moody College of Communication
- February 2021, Interviewed for KXAN piece “ “Video game industry levels up as more people stay home and play during pandemic.”
- October 2020, Speaker, Bridging Disciplines Program, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- July 2020, Panelist, “Architecting Online Courses”, Moody College Online Teaching and Learning Program, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- October 2019, Speaker, Bridging Disciplines Program, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- September 2019, Guest Artist, “Introduction to 2D Animation”, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- June 2019, Keynote Speaker, TED4SC: Technology, Engineering and Design for Science Communication, Faculdade De Ciências Da Universidade Do Porto / Porto, Portugal

- June 2019, Presenter, “Digital Composition on the Unreliable Canvas”, ISEA Summer School, Faculdade De Ciências Da Universidade Do Porto / Porto, Portugal
- May 2019, Guest Artist, UT Live Design Showcase, 2019
- May 2018, Guest Artist, UT Live Design Showcase 2018
- March 2018, Presenter, “*Creating Virtual Worlds*”, UT Explore, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- February 2018, Visiting Professor, National College of the Arts / Lahore, Pakistan
- November 2017, Speaker, “*Non Linear Narrative Production*” National College of the Arts / Lahore, Pakistan (live video lecture)
- October 2017, Guest Artist, “*Enron Raptor Class*”, Department of Theater and Dance, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- July 2017, Visiting Artist, “*Immersive Media: Producing Augmented Reality for Storytelling Projects*” iNova Media Lab, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa / Lisbon, Portugal
- May 2017, Guest Artist, UT Live Design Showcase 2017
- April 2017, Speaker, “*Creating Virtual Worlds*”, UT Explore, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- April 2017, Guest Lecturer, “*Introduction to Image and Sound*”, RTF Department, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- May 2016, Guest Artist, UT Live Design Showcase 2016
- February 2016, Speaker, “*Level Up: Topics in Video Games and Interactive Storytelling Production*”, Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- April 2016, Speaker, “*Virtual Worlds*”, UT Explore, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- April 2015, Presenter, “*Creating Virtual Worlds*”, UT Explore, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- April 2014, Presenter, “*Create Interactive Worlds*”, UT Explore, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- September 2016, Panelist, “*Radio-Television-Film*”, Moody College Family Weekend, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- April 2012, Speaker, “*Creating Video Games from Concept to Completion*”, SAGE Lecture Series, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- April 2012, Speaker, “*Cinematography for Digital Painters*”, SB Explore / Steambot Concept Art Workshop, New Orleans, LA
- July 2011, Instructor, “*ZON Portugal Animation Workshop*”, The University of Texas / Austin, TX
- March 2011, Guest Artist, “*Animation Workshop*”, Mostra Festival de Animação / Lisbon, Portugal
- February 2011, Guest Artist, “*IGDA Career Catalyst*”, IGDA Austin/Mary Margaret / Austin, TX

- February 2011, Guest Lecturer, “Introduction to 2D Animation”, The University of Texas / Austin, TX

Awards and Recognition

- Faculty Development Award 2023
- COVID Transformational Online Instruction Contributions (TONIC) Award
- Recognized in appreciation by Services for Students with Disabilities
- “Nicest Boy in 2nd Grade” Azle Optimist Club, 1980

Service

- RTF Media Studies Tenure Track hiring committee 2024
- C13 Instructional Technology Committee (university) 2023-
- RTF Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 2022-
- Online Curriculum Committee 2017-2023
- RTF Co-Teaching Committee 2022
- Moody Commencement Marshal 2023-2024
- Texas Commission on the Arts Young Masters-Visual & Media Arts Evaluation Panel 2021
- RTF Budget Council 2017-2023
- Digital Arts and Media BDP Faculty Panel 2017-
 - And Admissions Sub-Committee
- Game Dev and Design Steering Committee (*university*) 2020-
- Imagine Moody Stewardship Council 2019-
- Experiential Learning Initiative Ambassador 2019-2022
- Women in Animation Student Club Faculty Sponsor 2020-
- E-Portfolio Taskforce 2019-2021
- UT Theater and Dance Live Design Faculty Respondent 2021
- Game and Mobile Media Applications (GAMMA) Faculty 2012-2019
 - Prepare and contribute students for Capstone certificate program
- Moody College Undergraduate Scholarship Committee 2020-2021
- Undergraduate Learning Assistant Faculty Supervisor 2020
- RTF Equipment Requests Committee 2018-2019
- Undergraduate Learning Assistant Pilot Program 2017
 - Faculty Mentor
- Principal Agent in the administration of the Denius Sams Gaming Academy.

- CIIM Director Search Committee 2017
 - Represent The RTF department in a college level search for center director
- Facilities/Technology Committee 2016
 - Evaluate requests for technology upgrades to enhance teaching at undergraduate and graduate level
- RTF Chair Search Committee 2016-2017
 - Evaluate and interview candidates
- Moody College Scholarship Committee 2016-2017
- MFA Production Admissions Committee 2014-2015
- Explore UT 2013-2019

- **World Building and Environmental Art:** Painted cartoon backgrounds to fully realized CGI scenes, levels and worlds for animation, live action and interactive. Professional experience generating concept art, level and puzzle designs, matte paintings, paintovers, whiteboxes, props, dioramas, worlds, arenas, and virtual sets. My personal drawings are largely characterized by novel perspective techniques, speculative and fantastic landscapes, and the intersection of physical materials with emerging digital formats.
- **Sequential, Cinematic and Interactive Storytelling:** Experience writing, layout pencil, ink, color, lettering, scanning and printing comic strips, gags and panels, multi-issue and one off graphic novel and motion comic sequential art formats, Storyboard, Beatboards, Styleboards and guides, sound recording, animatics, and cinematics for multiple modes and platforms. I am also able to enhance and append through titles/credits, logo animations, motion graphics, infographics, animated and interactive GUI.
- **Practical and Visual Effects:** Directly contributed or supervised visual effects for dozens of films at undergraduate, graduate and professional levels. Experience as matte painter, animator, effects and simulation artist, compositor, on-set visual effects supervisor, effects animator for classical animation (drawn or stop motion). Experience producing plates, photogrammetry, hdri and 360 degree images to support visual effects work. Experience creating physical models and miniatures, armatures, maquettes and finished puppets and prosthetics.
- **Character Animation and Digital Performances:** Character design and concept art, model sheets, traditional hand drawn 2D character animation (acetate/paper or digital), stop motion, puppets, and rotoscope. Expertise in 3D modeling, sculpting and painting characters, hair and clothing, rigging and skinning, motion capture implementation, sweetening and sequencing.
- **Education:** presentations, keynotes, lectures, events, workshops, courses, certificates and programs to one-on-one conversations and individual mentorship, my passion is sharing my enthusiasm for creation, bridging the arts and sciences through entertainment, and discovering the talent and vision inside my students.