



## Dean Finnigan- Animation Director / Creative Partner for Pickly Pixel

I actually started animating quite a while after leaving Art College and so sneaked in through the back door. I studied foundation course in art and Design at Doncaster which I have extremely fond memories of. I was always interested in art and design at school, but the foundation course really stirred up my passion. I'm also grateful that computers were no where to be seen when I studied (yes, I am that old) and so it was drawing, drawing, drawing and more drawing. The ability to observe and transfer that to paper gave me an excellent grounding as I moved into animation.

I went on to study Silversmith at degree level and further studied an MA in art and Design at Sheffield Hallam University. I was introduced to computers as a way of designing more unique organic forms and became interested in moving away from traditional craft techniques. I also looked at introducing rapid prototyping as a way of visualising 3D forms which was essentially at a very early stage in its development and used layered paper rather than the resin which is prominent today.

Before too long I was totally absorbed with using computers as a way of designing in 3d and became more satisfied with visualising virtual forms rather than the making of them. At that time, roughly 1992, I was taking note of the visual progress games had been making through magazines such as Edge (which is still going strong). The front covers always seemed to have an amazing appeal of highly detailed characters which again stirred up an interest I wanted to pursue.

I headed down to London where I joined a young company making a foothold in PC gaming market. This was just on the cusp of the Playstation launch which was to change gaming radically and after spending a few years making 3D characters, props and environments for a point and click adventure, I was beginning to become interested in how characters move and what drives them to move. I next joined Codemasters where I was fortunate to work with some very accomplished animators who had come from very mixed backgrounds including feature film work and classical animation backgrounds. This all helped create a highly skilled team which allowed me to progress my skills further. Codemasters were also very good in sending team members on courses and was lucky enough to attend Richard Williams animation master class. After spending a few days watching the sheer passion Richard Williams has for animation, it's hard not to come away fired up. Along with the mountains of little gems of knowledge he passed on along the way.

I later moved away from games and spent nearly 2 years working for Passion Pictures which allowed me a different experience of pure animation for camera. I was now living and breathing and working with animation and enjoying every minute of it. Before heading over to Australia I spent the last 3 years as Lead Animator on Fable for the Xbox. It was an absolute privilege to work with such a massively talented bunch of individuals who shared a great passion for making something of significance with this award winning title. Lionhead were also forward thinking in training it's team members and invited Kyle Balda from Pixar to give an intensive few days master class.

In a nutshell I have worked for some great companies on some great projects along with freelancing on various other titles along the way. I think the ability to be able to mix games development with tv and film work has kept my passion high and allowed me to keep moving onto challenges new.

In January 2005 I moved over to Sydney to head up the animation department and begin working on a PS3 title which would eventually be published by Rockstar Games. The game was very ambitious in scope and would again provide me with new challenges to further progress my skill level. After 3 years of working on this title I was lured away to the excitement of animating on hi end cinematics used to promote hi profile games. This allows me to work very specifically on key framing characters ranging from dinosaurs, giant mechs, elephants and all kinds of interesting characters. The projects are a relatively short turnaround and before too long you are working on something new and exciting.

After over 14 years animating for both games, TV and film work, I am still in a fortunate position where I enjoy what I do with a huge amount of passion and look forward to some interesting projects in the planning (one of which is a fully CG feature film).

