

Darren K. Woodland, Jr.

Experimental Media Artist & Designer

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Professional Summary

Experimental media artist and designer with extensive experience in immersive digital media, game development, and interactive art. Strong technical background in 3D modeling, animation and simulation, immersive technologies, real-time audio-visual systems, and creative coding with academic roles as researcher and instructor. Combines proficiency in digital content creation (DCC) tools (like Maya and Houdini), game engines (like Unity and Unreal Engine), and programming languages including C#, Python, and C++ with experience in Perforce version control systems. Excels in cross-disciplinary collaboration, developing interactive performances and installations, and has showcased work through publications, presentations, and exhibitions at domestic and international venues.

Education

Drexel University — Philadelphia, PA

Ph.D. in Digital Media (January 2022 – Present)

- Research: Afrofuturism, real-time audio, immersive experience design, live performance, narrative co-creation

Graduate Minor in Computer Science (September 2022 – January 2025)

- Focus: Software design, computer vision, machine learning, audio programming

North Carolina State University — Raleigh, NC

M.A.D. in Experimental Media Arts (August 2018 – December 2020)

- Research: Sound, interaction design, extended realities

Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities (May 2019 – December 2020)

- Focus: Games in social contexts, ludic networks, game design

University of South Carolina — Columbia, SC

B.A. in Media Arts & Art Studio (August 2013 – December 2017)

- Media Arts Concentration: Animation, narrative writing, game design
- Art Studio Concentration: Graphic design, illustration, drawing

Work Experience

Robotics, Automation, and Dance (RAD) Lab — Philadelphia, PA

Artist in Residence *(May 2025 – Present)*

- Exploring symbolic human movement for applications in human-robot interaction (HRI) through collaboration
- Develop documentation, proposal, and interactive resources for grant funded usability study and project

Drexel University — Philadelphia, PA

Version Control Administrative Assistant *(January 2024 – Present)*

- Manage Perforce version control server, facilitating workflow between students, faculty, and IT
- Develop documentation and learning resources to streamline version control adoption

Graduate Teaching Fellows *(January 2022 – Present)*

- Teach courses in game history, game development, and advanced game art, covering particle systems, proceduralism, and technical art
- Instruct students in 2D and 3D techniques and workflows for real-time tools, storytelling, and technical proficiency
- Design curriculum and learning objectives for game development and digital media courses, including lesson planning, assessment creation, and instructional material development

PhD Researcher *(January 2022 – Present)*

- Research real-time audio, body tracking, and narrative co-creation in dance and Afrofuturism
- Collaborated with Drexel Performing Arts to develop synchronized visuals and simulations for a live dance performance
- Collaborated on a prestigious Rankin Scholar project to create visuals and an interactive installation and exhibition

Colorado Conservatory of Dance — Denver, CO

Freelance Multimedia Artist *(January 2024 – July 2024)*

- Designed and developed audio elements and supporting animations for a live stage dance production
- Created real-time visuals in Unreal Engine, including motion-based animations
- Integrated and edited multimedia content using DaVinci Resolve to enhance production quality

UNCSA METL — Winston-Salem, NC

Art Director & Technical Artist *(April 2021 – October 2021)*

- Led art direction and asset development for a VR project, creating or compiling 200+ assets
- Developed 3D models and textures for virtual reality environment
- Integrated spatial audio and sound design into the production pipeline

MxReality Lab — Raleigh, NC

Digital Modeler *(October 2020 – December 2020)*

- Created high-fidelity character models based on historical references using cutting-edge character creation software
- Applied knowledge of human anatomy, color, and rendering for accurate character models using Reallusion Character Creator and iClone

The IntelliMedia Group (CEI) — Raleigh, NC

Digital Artist & Graduate Research Assistant *(May 2019 – December 2020)*

- Took ownership of asset pipeline development by designing, modeling, and animating 2D/3D assets for educational games and VR training applications
- Created character models, props, and environmental assets for interactive and educational applications

NCSU College of Design — Raleigh, NC

Graduate Teaching Assistant *(August 2018 – May 2019)*

- Taught industry-standard design software and workflows, reinforcing technical foundations for students

University of South Carolina (UofSC) Dept. of IT — Columbia, SC

Digital Artist *(May 2018 – July 2018)*

- Designed and illustrated a large-format learning map for university-wide IT training

South Carolina ETV — Columbia, SC

Digital Media Intern *(January 2017 – May 2017)*

- Produced an animated short on the life and achievements of a prominent South Carolinian scientist

Publications & Exhibitions

Digital Twin (Art Exhibition) — *Digital Twin: Transforming human experience through digital rendering, exploring the effects of technology on physical and psychological existence*, 2025

SIGGRAPH Asia (Paper) — *Plumes and Pixels: Bridging Digital and Traditional Art in SciArt Education*, 2024

Media Arts and Design Conference (Paper & Presentation) — *Motifs of the Future Metamorphosis: Afrofuturism in Media Arts and Design*, 2024

Mandell Theater (Dance Performance) — *Griljef*, 2024

Colorado Conservatory of Dance (Dance Performance) — *Home is in Me*, 2024

Ars Electronica (Presentation) — *Echoes of Harmonic Threads*, 2023

SXSW, SIGGRAPH, Bucheon Film Festival, Pico VR — *Black Ice VR*, 2022

Audiokinetic Blog — *Cybernetic Thrills: Black Ice VR*, 2022

NCSU M.A.D. Thesis — *On Soundscape: Listening as Interaction*, 2020

ALGA of SC InShow 22 Awards — *Pop! Art Book Covers*, 2017

Knowitall.org (Animated Video) — *Scientific SC*, 2017

Skills

Adobe Creative Suite: Creative Cloud Suite, Substance

Programming: Visual programming, C, C++, Java, Python, JavaScript, Lua

Modeling & Simulation: Houdini, Maya, Reallusion

Game Development: Unity, Unreal Engine

XR Platforms: Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR)

Audio Development: Reaper, Max/MSP, MetaSounds, Wwise

Interactive Media: TouchDesigner, Isadora, PureData

Version Control and Project Management: Perforce, Git, Plastic SCM (Unity), Jira

Media Editing: DaVinci Resolve, After Effects, Adobe Premiere Pro

Design Principles: Color theory, graphic design, visual storytelling, design thinking, design process, iterative design

Core Competencies: Cross-disciplinary collaboration, technical documentation, project management, research methodology, performance direction