

Michal Finegold

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PRODUCT LEADER | SOFTWARE DEVELOPER | COMPUTER GRAPHICS PROFESSIONAL

Accomplished leader with 15+ years of experience in software development, computer graphics, and product management. Possess a unique combination of technical and artistic skills. Adept at leading the development of software tools for internal stakeholders, B2B clients, and consumers. Experienced in high-end CG projects for film, episodic content, and advertising. Pioneered the integration of generative AI workflows into the visual effects pipeline.

WORK HISTORY

Founder, Shmonster | 01/2016 - Present

- Lead ongoing development of innovative tools and apps that integrate art, animation, and technology with AI-assisted animation and real-time 3D experiences for education and entertainment
- Design AI-driven animation and video generation pipelines using ComfyUI, Stable Diffusion, WAN, Runway, and more
- Conceptualized, designed, and led the end-to-end development of five original interactive mobile apps in the creative educational space, overseeing their creation from inception to execution
- Utilize agile methodologies to complete projects within short timelines and on tight budgets
- Perform market research and apply UX design principles that have driven nearly **1 million downloads** of the company's flagship app, PuppetMaster
- Secured a **utility patent** for PuppetMaster's innovative techniques of intuitive rigging and motion capture animation, which enable children to easily bring their drawings and toys to life
- **Y Combinator finalist** (onsite interviews) for PuppetMaster
- Presented at technology and education events, driving school adoption of company apps and earning recognition from organizations such as the American Association of School Librarians
- Crafted games that use custom web-based databases to dynamically generate gameplay content, fostering diverse gaming experiences and allowing for seamless live updates without extensive development cycles

Director of Product, Dopple | 04/2025 - 08/2025

- Led product strategy and execution for Dopple's real-time WebGL/Three.js 3D product configurator platform, leveraging GPU-accelerated rendering and generative AI for high-fidelity experiences on consumer devices
- Defined and prioritized the roadmap; managed cross-team dependencies and mitigated technical risks around performance, compatibility, and scalability
- Collaborated with engineering, design, and art teams to deliver scalable, high-fidelity 3D & AR experiences that integrate smoothly into modern web environments
- Introduced new capabilities such as interactive 3D features, batch rendering, AI-generated imagery, and analytics tools
- Established product processes, documentation, and cross-functional communication channels to accelerate delivery and improve team alignment
- Supported go-to-market efforts by translating technical innovations into clear client-facing value propositions

Computer Graphics Supervisor, CoSA VFX | 05/2022 - 03/2024

- Supervised CG production across multiple network, cable, and streaming shows
- Introduced generative AI workflows (ComfyUI + Stable Diffusion), reducing costs and expanding production capabilities
- Projects include **Tom Swift**, **The Mysterious Benedict Society**, **Station 19**, and **Westworld**
- Managed schedules, dependencies, and delivery risks while leading teams of CG artists to meet demanding client deadlines
- Taught team members best practices and helped them solve technical and artistic challenges
- Facilitated effective communication and collaboration among teams, stakeholders, and clients
- Designed and implemented customized pipeline tools based on input from CG artists and supervisors

Computer Graphics Technical Director & Lead, Multiple VFX Studios | 07/2007 - 04/2022

- Implemented and supervised visual effects work on many film, television, and advertising projects, at companies such as **Weta Digital**, **Framestore**, **Animal Logic**, **Method Studios**, **The Moving Picture Company**, **The Mill**, and many more
- Notable projects include **The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies**, **Happy Feet Two**, **Captain America: The First Avenger**, and the **Geico Gecko** commercials
- Oversaw teams and provided mentorship to junior staff members

- Conducted R&D as a pipeline developer, designing, building, and maintaining tools for 3D and 2D artists
- Designed user-friendly UI/UX for pipeline tools and provided training and technical support, resulting in increased adoption among artists
- Contributed as a 3D artist and digital compositor, primarily focusing on lighting, compositing, and look development, with frequent work as a generalist as well
- Effectively facilitated cross-disciplinary communication between diverse art and technology departments to ensure smooth collaboration, efficiency, and productivity

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Instructor, School of Visual Arts | New York, NY

- Created and taught Lighting and Rendering Course for BFA

Adjunct Instructor, Bloomfield College | Bloomfield, NJ

- Created and taught 3D Modeling Course for Creative Arts and Technology Department

3D Artist & Technical Assistant, Charlex | New York, NY

- Worked on high-end television commercials for prominent consumer brands, including **Procter & Gamble, Verizon, and AT&T**
- Production work focused on materials, lighting, and compositing
- R&D work developing and maintaining production pipeline tools
- Designed and implemented the front end of a new web-based render submission system

Software Engineer, VCON | Herzliya, Israel

- Multithreaded programming, developing the VCON Conference Bridge – a server that enables video conferencing between multiple endpoints
- Redesigned the code for a new version of the product

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Digital Imaging and Design | New York University

Graduated with distinction, thesis recognized with honors, received partial academic scholarship, focus on 3D

Bachelor of Science in Physics and Computer Science | Tel Aviv University

Received partial academic scholarship from Physics Department

CORE COMPETENCIES

Program & Project Management, Cross-Functional Leadership, Software Development, Computer Graphics, Product Design, Art Direction, UI/UX Design, Object-Oriented Programming, Database Design, Problem Solving

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Languages & Frameworks: C++, C#, Objective-C, Swift, Python, MEL, TCL, SQL, Unity, ARKit, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Three.js

VFX: 3D, 2D, Design, Look Development, 3D Lighting, 3D Modeling, Shaders, Animation, Dynamics, Particles, Rigging, Rendering, Texturing, Digital Compositing, Motion Graphics, Editing, Scripting, Generative AI

Computer Graphics Software: Maya, Houdini, Blender, ZBrush, V-Ray, Arnold, RenderMan, 3Delight, Mental Ray, Mantra, Nuke, Photoshop, After Effects, InDesign, Premiere, Final Cut Pro, Motion, Shake

Emerging Technologies: AR, VR, Computer Vision, Motion Capture, Machine Learning, AI

Generative AI Tools: ComfyUI, Stable Diffusion, WAN Video, Midjourney, Runway, Leonardo, MiniMax, Luma

Platforms: iOS, Android, Windows, macOS, Linux, ChromeOS, Web

Project Management Tools: Trello, Figma, Git, Jira

Math & Quantitative Analysis: 3D Math, Linear Algebra, Probability Theory, Data Science, 3D Geometry

Traditional Art: Drawing, Painting, Sculpture