

Jason MacLeod

- **Location:** Pasadena, CA
- **Phone:** 626-676-8011
- **Email:** jason.d.macleod@gmail.com
- **Web:** www.thejasonmacleod.com
- **LinkedIn:** linkedin.com/in/jdmacleod
- **GitHub:** github.com/jdmacleod
- **IMDb:** imdb.com/name/nm0533900

Summary

Hands-on technical leader with expertise in animation and visual effects. Proven ability to build, coach, and manage diverse teams. Strong technology background. Results-driven collaborator with ability to evaluate competing priorities, listen to stakeholders, and deliver process improvements to alleviate operational pain points. Able to make connections and provide insights spanning creative and technical domains. Fluent with modern development harnesses, including Claude Code and GitHub Copilot.

Experience

DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION & TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY - NICKELODEON ANIMATION (2025-PRESENT)

Driving projects to support workflows and improve efficiency across all series and streaming productions.

- Led integration of Paramount Archives AI search plugin for Adobe Photoshop, giving artists fast access to curated production images through natural language search using Canto. In a remote-first environment, this cut artists' reference-search time an estimated 3x and reduced the legal risk of uncleared visuals reaching production.
- Partnered with the *Max & The Midknights* creative team to open-source a Python Unreal Engine → Adobe Premiere editing toolset, allowing Editorial and StoryVis departments to work hand-in-hand in their favored applications.

- Developed an on-premise screenplay analytics and breakdown system with deterministic and AI-assisted workflows, including a script chatbot. Implemented with Python/Streamlit, backed by FastAPI, PostgreSQL, and Ollama. The system delivers an automated first-pass breakdown in 25 minutes for a feature and under 10 minutes for a half-hour episode.

DIRECTOR, PIPELINE & SOFTWARE - COMPANY 3 / METHOD (2020-2025)

Directed pipeline integration and software development for a mid-size VFX studio with offices in LA, Atlanta, and Vancouver. Led an Agile team of ~11 developers and TDs providing workflows, tools, and support for 200+ artists creating VFX for episodic and feature projects using Houdini, Maya, and Nuke, backed by ShotGrid. (Earlier titled Pipeline Supervisor, Encore VFX, 2020-2021.)

- Delivered quarterly and annual software roadmaps to business leadership; managed hiring and staffing for regular production, “crunch time” support, and tool development.
- Deadline render farm automation with Events, including an A/B testing framework (facade) and auto-wrangling integrated with ShotGrid.
- Used Ansible playbooks to migrate datacenter render resources between company divisions within a 60-minute maintenance window, reusing existing hardware and reducing AWS spend.
- Built render-farm and disk-consumption metrics reporting (Python, NumPy, Seaborn) and a disk cleanup system (elect-quarantine-delete) covering a 2 PB Isilon storage cluster. The cleanup reclaimed 10+ TB of temporary files weekly, preventing the full-disk events that halt production.
- Multiplatform rendering (Linux, Windows) for RenderMan via a path-mapping filter written in C++; Houdini × RenderMan → Nuke direct preview using C++ and boost::asio.
- Modernized production services: NodeJS/Express × MongoDB REST service with exponential backoff and Swagger-documented endpoints; asset-request creation service (ShotGrid, LDAP auth) on NodeJS/Express and Docker/docker-compose.
- Directed alignment with the VFX Reference Platform and migration of 100+ product repos from Python 2 to Python 3.

- Managed through technical debt and crisis events (failing 2+ PB Isilon cluster, Maya malware intrusion); primary contact with vendors Autodesk, Foundry, and SideFX.
- Coached and mentored the team to improve software engineering practices (code reviews, unit tests, semantic versioning, conventional commits, one-step builds) and raise the quality of customer support.

BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE / GENERAL MANAGER - THE ANIMATION GUILD (2016-2019)

General manager of the only U.S. labor union for animation workers, a 5000+ member 501(c)(5) nonprofit with annual revenue of \$4M.

- Lead negotiator for the first entertainment union labor agreement to set animation-specific terms for streaming-service productions; led the contract negotiation team informed by internal economic analysis and industry forecasts.
- Led efforts to modernize operations, technology, and communications, guided by a data-driven approach.
- Renovated facilities and expanded staff by 50% to improve quality of services; established and hired director-level roles for communications and community outreach.
- Selected outside counsel for legal matters; familiar with federal and California labor law.
- As ambassador for the animation community, resolved employment conflicts and labor concerns with employer representatives from all major Los Angeles animation studios.

LIGHTING ARTIST / LIGHTING SUPERVISOR - WALT DISNEY ANIMATION STUDIOS (1999-2016)

Over 17 years, contributed creatively and technically to ten feature films. Key roles:

- ***Frozen*** [Lighting Supervisor] - led a team of lighting artists to deliver five film sequences.
- ***Tangled*** [Lighting Artist / TD] - prior to shot work, worked as developer (Python/C++/Agile) in the software department writing DLight, the studio's internal application for lighting/rendering.

- **Bolt** [Lighting Artist] - wrote a proof-of-concept RenderMan DSO and pipeline action used for stereo right-eye rendering as an AOV, reducing stereo render demands by 40%.
- **Chicken Little** [Look Development Lead] - managed a department of 20 artists and TDs on Disney's first all-CG feature. Collaborated on software for fur, feathers, and grass.

Credits: *Mission to Mars* (through DreamQuest Images), *Chicken Little*, *Meet the Robinsons*, *Bolt*, *Tangled*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Frozen*, *Big Hero 6*, *Zootopia*, *Moana*.

INSTRUCTOR - STUDIOARTS / FRIEDMAN 3D (2000-2001)

Designed and taught "Intro to Maya" classes for classically trained industry professionals.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR - CINESITE DIGITAL STUDIOS (1998-1999)

Developed and integrated visual effects, doing preliminary composites in Cineon and Shake as needed. Emphasis on particle effects and procedural animation using Maya and Dynamation. Taught studio classes in Perl; helped integrate LSF renderfarm software at the Hollywood facility.

Credits: *Armageddon*, *Practical Magic*, *Double Jeopardy*, *Lost Souls*, *Chill Factor*, *Deep Blue Sea*.

INSTRUCTOR - GNOMON (1998-1999)

Designed and taught classes in Maya to RenderMan (MtoR) for students and early-career VFX artists.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR - SANTA BARBARA STUDIOS (1996-1998)

Responsible for seeing all aspects of a shot through to completion once animation was approved. Lit, textured, rendered, and composited digital elements into live-action. Specialized in particle effects using Dynamation. Participated in development of the

internal hair system used on *American Werewolf in Paris* - which was acquired by AliasWavefront to become Maya Fur.

Credits: *American Werewolf in Paris*, *Spawn*, *Paulie*.

Education

- **B.S. Chemical Engineering** - Caltech, 1993
- **M.A. Chemistry** - UC Santa Barbara, 1998

Skills

- **Languages:** Python, C++, Perl, JavaScript/Node.js
- **AI / ML:** Ollama, AI-assisted workflows, LLM chatbots, natural language search, Claude Code, GitHub Copilot
- **Backend & Data:** FastAPI, Node.js/Express, MongoDB, PostgreSQL, Streamlit, REST APIs, Swagger, LDAP, NumPy, Seaborn
- **VFX / Animation:** Houdini, Maya, Nuke, RenderMan, Deadline, ShotGrid/Shotgun, 3DEqualizer, Unreal Engine, Adobe Premiere, Adobe Photoshop, Canto, Cineon, Shake, Dynamation
- **Infrastructure & DevOps:** Ansible, Docker/docker-compose, CI/CD, AWS, Linux (CentOS), Isilon storage, GNU Make, boost::asio, VFX Reference Platform
- **Practices:** Agile development, code reviews, unit testing, semantic versioning, conventional commits, one-step builds, team leadership, negotiation, stakeholder management