

RAY SPENCE

Senior Production Artist · Character Designer · AI Workflow Specialist

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Versatile senior digital artist with 5+ years of production experience in cybersecurity awareness animation, character design, and illustration. Currently serves a dual role as Senior Production Artist and sole AI R&D Specialist for a 10-person illustration department — researching, building, and deploying AI-powered creative workflows that have reduced production time by over 90% on key deliverables. Brings deep expertise in vector illustration, character design, storyboarding, and production pipeline optimization, backed by a Bachelor's degree in Illustration from Columbia College Chicago.

EXPERIENCE

Senior Production Artist & AI R&D Specialist | Huntress (via Curricula) 2021 – Present

- Senior vector illustrator and visual director on “Huntress” — a flagship animated cybersecurity awareness training series used by enterprises worldwide.
- Organically developed and now hold a dual role as the department's sole AI Research & Development Specialist, driving adoption of AI tools across a 10-person illustration team.
- Built AI-powered production tools including a SAP Story Ad Lib Generator, automated shot breakdown system, and an interactive animator handoff tool with color-coded triage.
- Reduced shot breakdown production time from 60+ minutes to under 2 minutes using LLM-driven automation; reduced storyboard creation from days to ~5 minutes using image generation AI.
- Designed and documented repeatable AI workflow playbooks (SKILL.md format) for team-wide use in Claude Code.
- Developed an Animator Feedback Ticketing System and an Automated Asset Organization & Tagging System for Illustrator files.
- Responsible for scene composition, character design, UI design, prop illustration, and production handoffs to animators in After Effects.
- Actively advocating for formal recognition and compensation of the AI R&D role through structured project documentation presented to upper management.

Texture Artist | TimeSplitters Rewind 2024

- Created game-ready textures for the fan-made remake of the TimeSplitters series, built in Unreal Engine.
- Captured the look and feel of the original franchise while working within modern real-time rendering constraints.

Production Artist | Curricula 2021

- Member of the illustration and animation creative team for a cybersecurity awareness training platform focused on storytelling-driven employee education.
- Contributed character illustration, scene work, and production assets for animated training content.

Children's Book Illustrator & Animator | ROOTEDin LLC 2021

- Illustrated and animated interactive eBooks for grades K–5, combining education with engaging visual storytelling.

iOS App Illustrator | Texties 2020

- Created character illustrations for a short-story reader app spanning genres from sci-fi and horror to romance and comedy.

In-House Designer & Illustrator | The Print Lounge Inc. 2017 – 2019

- Created logos, branding, and merchandise designs for clients.
- Cleaned and vectorized graphics for production; operated flatbed vinyl cutters and ran the in-house apparel production line.

SKILLS & TOOLS

Illustration & Design	Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, After Effects, Figma
Character & Concept	Character Design, Turnarounds, Expression Sheets, Storyboarding, Environments
Texturing & 3D	Substance Painter, Substance Designer, ZBrush, Autodesk Maya, Keyshot, Fusion 360
AI & Automation	Claude (claude.ai + Claude Code), Gemini, LLM Workflow Automation, AI Pipeline Development
Game & Engine	Unreal Engine

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration · Minor in Animation

Columbia College Chicago

AWARDS, EXHIBITIONS & NOTABLE PROJECTS

- Best Character + Concept Artist — ILLO Awards — Columbia College Chicago (2019)
- HayStack Craft School Scholarship — HayStack Mountain School of Crafts, Maine (2019) — trained under oil painter Jenny Brillhart (represented by Kuckei Gallery, Berlin)
- Portrait Show Exhibition — Glass Curtain Gallery, Chicago (2018) — juried portrait exhibition themed around Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; 50 large-format illustrated portraits (36" × 48")
- Cinco De Mayo Clothing Design — Chicago Mexican Pride Festival, Pilsen (2018) — apparel designs went into production
- Art in Motion — Shirley Ryan AbilityLab Benefit (2019)
- Misericordia Art Show — Misericordia Heart of Mercy (2019)

ARTIST STATEMENT

I lean toward an exploration of duality between imagination and reality, using an eclectic collision of references to express the memory of my early visual impressions. My work channels the energy of 90s television commercials, Saturday morning cartoons, superhero mythology, occult imagery, and geometric forms. In a world bombarded by images, I want my work to have a unique character that combines the aesthetics of the past with the energy of the present — and through that chaos, to slow down the viewer's attention just long enough to make them think twice.