

Michael Francis

Concept Art | Visual Development | Comics | Illustration | Fine Arts

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Michael Francis is a Kiowa/Cherokee artist with 8+ years of experience working in comics, animation and games. He has achieved a BFA in Visual Development at the Academy of Art in San Francisco, CA. Having worked with clients like The Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bent Image Lab/Columbia Pictures, Michael has a proven track record of delivering high quality character designs, props, storyboards, background paintings and environment concepts for 2D and 3D pipelines. He carries strong drawing and painting foundational skills alongside industry standard tools, like Blender, Photoshop and more. Michael is adept at turning creative briefs into polished assets that meet production standards while enhancing storytelling. Michael also writes his own indigenous centered stories and published them online as digital webcomics, with ambitions to print and distribute comics physically.

Michael also uses ZERO AI in any part of his process. All work is 100% hand-crafted to meet the projects needs.

CREATIVE PROJECTS

Various Clients | Freelance Illustrator and Designer | 01/28 - current

- I worked with various clients doing commissioned illustrations for media projects. Clients included YouTubers, musicians, various local events and vendors to create their logos, t-shirts and posters for events, social media, publishing and animated projects.

Mikey's Comics | Writer/Artist/Founder | 12/25 - current

- I started writing scripts for comics in December to build a comics brand of my own, for indigenous centered stories which I see as nearly nonexistent in wider media. The first issue in my first series, Starman's Odyssey, released in May 2026 with more to come soon. Creating comics has combined almost every skill I have along with new ones acquired along the way. The included writing, drawing, marketing, branding, social media and distribution among many more.

Firefly Studios - Freelance Illustrator - 04/26 - 06/26 (Per Image based Contract)

- I collaborated with the folks at Firefly Studios on an illustration for their mobile game Stronghold Kingdoms. The illustration will be used as marketing material for their upcoming event in November celebrating Native American Heritage Month. The illustration features a band of Native American warriors charging through a sunset baked canyon in Arizona. This marketing illustration will be used in app/game stores, the game's website and social media to promote the in-game event.

Luxark Studio | Junior Concept Artist | 06/25 - 09/25 (Assignment Based Contract)

- Designed Character Illustrations for a Star Trek themed TTRPG (Table Top Role Playing Game) Manual, "Star Trek - The Scion Expanse Core Rulebook". I was assigned two existing characters from the world of Star Trek and tasked with recreating them to fit the style of the TTRPG Manual, a line art focused style with cel shading.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior "Unmet Needs Animated Short" (publicly unavailable) | Visual Development / Background Painter | 01/25 - 04/25 (Day Rate Contract)

- Collaborated with my team and the BIA to create an animated short summarizing a report on how climate change impacts coastal tribes in the lower 48. My responsibilities were cultural input and research for style development and script refinement. I also contributed storyboards, animatics, background paintings and spot illustrations as needed.

Bent Image Lab / Columbia Pictures - "Harold and the Purple Crayon" (released/shipped Aug. 14, 2024) | Color Script Artist | 05/23 (Per Image based Contract)

- Demonstrated exceptional collaboration skills by providing rendered color keys to aid the VFX Lighting Team create the final animation for the sequences I was tasked, which were for the two short 2D animated portions of the film.
- Partnered with my art director to create finished color keys that fits the project's children's book art style, using a provided style guide, tools and guidance.

SCAD Animation "Untitled Animated Student Short Film" | Concept Artist | 09/18 - 12/18

- Created various pieces of concept art for an animated short film, I designed props and backgrounds.
- Assisted the story team in refining the story to fit within the animation pipeline

Ford Motor Company / SCAD Pro | Color Key Artist | 09/18

- Through SCAD Collaborative Learning Center I collaborated with students and Ford to create color keys used in an unreleased motion graphics video as an advertising pitch to Ford, using provided moodboards and 3D renders to create a cohesive background look and style

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Apple Inc. | Sales Specialist | 10/21 - 04/25

In-N-Out | Clean Up | 09/25 - current

IKEA | Seasonal Merch Basics Co-worker | 01/21 - 04/21

Walmart | Seasonal Overnight Stocker | 10/20 - 01/21

The LEGO Group | Brick Specialist | 09/19 - 03/20

Follet Higher Edu | Sales Associate | 09/2018 - 04/19

SKILLS

Soft Skills

- Creative Thinker: Thrives in creatively solving design challenges and contributing innovative ideas.
- Communication Pro: Strong verbal and written communication skills, demonstrated through collaboration with diverse teams and client interactions.
- Time Sensitivity: Executes a fast paced workflow that is both creative and time efficient, delivering high quality work while under pressure.
- Team Collaboration: Collaborates seamlessly with team members, clients, and required parties to achieve common goals.
- Open to Feedback: Demonstrates an uplifting attitude and openness to feedback, contributing to a collaborative and constructive work environment.

Creative Skills

- Proficient in drawing human anatomy, perspective, form, composition, lighting, and color theory.
- Excellent draftsmanship, strong foundational 2D skills and knowledge of traditional illustration techniques.
- Deep understanding of visual cinematic principles like depth of field, point of view, layouts, staging and lighting.
- Expertise in designing set/location/props/environments, characters/creatures, prop/weapons and storyboards.
- Strong knowledge of animation fundamentals like movement and action to enhance storytelling and gameplay.
- Ability to move comfortably between a range of artistic styles like painterly, live-action and cartoony.
- Efficient workflow that is optimized for production schedules.
- Maintain visual consistency across shots with appropriate scale and perspective to match character keys and boards.
- 3D modeling tools, sculpting, rigging, texturing, lighting and composing experience for 2D art and 3D art projects.
- Understanding of the pipeline for Game Design and Feature Animation and can provide context to guide all stages of development
- Conduct efficient and detailed research to rapidly iterate designs that best suit gameplay and cinematography needs.

SOFTWARE KNOWLEDGE

- macOS, Windows, Linux, Android, iOS, iPadOS
- Procreate, Clip Studio, Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere Pro, After Effects, Affinity, Final Cut Pro, ShotGrid
- Blender, Unreal Engine 5, Unity 3D, Godot, Maya, CAD
- Microsoft Office, Figma, OBS, Visual Studio Code, Xcode, Slack, Discord, Terminal
- Python, Markdown, HTML/CSS, Javascript, C#, Swift

EDUCATION

- Graduated 3.1 GPA, BFA (Bachelors of Fine Arts) in Visual Development from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco, California, School of Visual Development
- Attended/Transferred Out, (Bachelors of Fine Arts) in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia, School of Illustration
- Graduated, High School Diploma from South Anchorage High School, Anchorage, Alaska