

Member Spotlight: Amanda Heck



How did you get your start in the Industry? What influenced you to enter into the Entertainment world? I have been fascinated with the entertainment industry almost my whole life. When I was a child I saw an episode of *How'd They Do That* on the Discovery channel about visual and special effects. I knew then that I wanted to be a VFX artist. I went to school for visual effects and motion graphics and life steered me into the motion graphics field here in the Twin Cities.

What is your educational background? I studied film production at Minnesota State University Moorhead for three years where I decided to concentrate my education more on visual effects. I then transferred to the Art Institute International Minnesota, in Minneapolis, and graduated with a bachelors degree in Visual Effects & Motion Graphics.

What are you currently working on? I currently work as the Lead Motion Designer at Alpha Video & Audio in the creative department. I design motion graphics for digital displays using mainly After Effects, Photoshop, Illustrator, and Cinema 4D. As Lead, I also review spots created by other designers and make sure they are high enough quality to send to the customer. Our customer base includes mainly casinos, corporations, schools, and sports complexes.

What is your favorite story to tell about working in this industry? I do not have any specific stories that I like to tell about the industry. I just love building relationships with people in the industry, both clients and fellow artists alike.

What is your most memorable/favorite project? One of my most memorable projects as of late has been for a casino in Baton Rouge, LA. Our creative team created a concept for a slot bank topper for a brand new slot machine that they were launching only at that property. I worked day and night creating a 3D animation, in Cinema 4D, of a crate spinning, unfolding, and landing with items inside of it. Until I started this project I had worked in Maya and 3D Studio Max, but never touched Cinema 4D. As I was creating and animating, I was learning the software from the ground up. In the end, I had created something that not only made the customer happy, but inspired them to hire our team to develop creative content for the rest of their property.

What inspires you? I am inspired by the world around me. I can be inspired to create a design based on nature, a great design I see in print or on TV, paintings, movies, or really anything I find intriguing and/or beautiful.

What are some of your hobbies and interests? I consider myself a geeky, artsy, jock. Some of my hobbies and interests include kickboxing, volleyball, painting, reading, visiting art and science museums, and the list goes on.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? In ten? I am a true believer that life will dictate where you are at any point in your life. Though I like to set goals for myself in my career and life, I never put a timeline on it. Life just might have other plans, and I enjoy the ride wherever I am at. That being said, I have two main goals for my career. First, along the motion graphics path, I see myself becoming an art director. Second, I see myself working more toward motion graphics for compositing in live action and eventually compositing visual effects for television.

What advice would you offer to a young female looking to get into this industry? My advice for a young female looking to get into the industry is something I think we all have learned. Work hard, be yourself, have fun, be kind to everyone you meet, and don't take anyone's crap.

If you could work with anyone (dead or alive) who would it be and why? I would like to work with JJ Abrams. I think he would be a lot of fun to work with, and at the end of the day I would have had a part in making something that entertains millions of people. His films may not be grand artistic pieces, but they are entertaining and give you 90-120 min to escape the world.

Would you like us to feature you in our monthly newsletter and on our website?

Head to <http://mnwift.org/membership/application/> and submit your member application today!

If you're already a member, download the individual application and submit the second page with a head shot to communications@mnwift.org.

