

Out of this world: ASU student turns love of art, space into career

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Combining his love for 3-D animation, space and engineering, Sean Amidan has turned a hobby into a career opportunity.

Amidan, a senior earth and space exploration major with a concentration in systems design, is the lead visualization specialist at the Space and Terrestrial Robotic Exploration Laboratory (SpaceTReX) at Arizona State University.



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He spends his days creating and designing 3-D models of CubeSats (miniature satellites) for the **Asteroid Origins Satellite** (<https://asunews.asu.edu/20140217-aosati-launch>) (AOSAT) project, designing logos for the School of Earth and Space Exploration outreach programs and developing 3-D visualization software.

“The professor I work for (Jekan Thanga) is in charge of the whole lab, and I know he has done a few things [with] the International Space Station, so that’s cool,” Amidan said. “Some of the professors I’ve had in my classes have worked on Hubble, the space telescope ... and now I’m working with [them].”

Amidan discovered his skill for 3-D animation in high school when he took two years of 3-D animation classes, but never envisioned it carrying through into college. He started off at ASU on the pre-med track, then decided to try out engineering before he finally settled in at School of Earth and Space Exploration after accepting a job in the SpaceTReX lab.

"It was more kind of a hobby so I started to do different stuff in college but then I got lucky and found this job working for the lab," Amidan said.

Along with his 3-D animation work in the lab, Amidan also gets to explore the software, programming and robotics elements of the space program in his classes, which, in turn, often informs his work in the lab.

"My degree really helps in the lab because I can really understand why [something is] being built this way, or what it's being built for," Amidan said. "It would be really hard to do the 3-D modeling without my degree and that knowledge."

Amidan's favorite project so far has been the AOSAT CubeSats. A CubeSat is a small, modular satellite, about the size of a loaf of bread. Amidan is designing the artistic renderings for the project, helping to bring the concept to life, with the guidance of his professor and NASA experts.

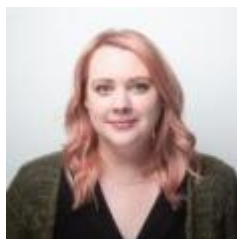
Currently in his last semester at ASU, Amidan is looking toward the future and has already started to apply for jobs after graduation. If he had to pick his dream job, the monthly magazine Popular Science would be at the top of his list.

"I joke around with people saying that I want to work at Popular Science and do all their artwork and science models. I think that would be pretty fun," Amidan said.

Back at the lab, Amidan is continuing to create artist renderings of the CubeSat, and will continue to make tweaks as the project grows.

The ASU CubeSat is expected to be flight-ready by May 2016.

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