# Digital Media Youth Expo 2021

**By Isabelle Spies, DMA Student**

At the end of quarter two, the Digital Media Academy hosted the Digital Media Youth Expo over Zoom.

The Digital Media Youth Expo consisted of scheduled presentations from organizations like EA Sports and Think Tank Training Centre.

I attended the EA Sports presentation, as I'm interested in game design and wanted to learn more about the design process that happens in the gaming industry. Aria, a former DMA student, told me about the design process he and his partner went through to create the story for their game *Wilted,* which was very useful to me. I also got to see what the back end of a game looks like. I learned about what animation in games looks like, bugs in games, and how important it is to problem solve.

Next, I attended the CG Masters presentation, which I found interesting. The presenters talked about the process of 3D modeling and design, lighting, layouts in animating and teamwork. We also heard from some of the graduates from CG Masters who talked more about the program.

I then attended Think Tank's presentation. A representative talked about what it is like animating for Sony's animated movies, reference shots and how the representative himself got into animating. The next presenter talked about how he got into visual effects, working in visual effects for Marvel, his work for Avengers Infinity Wars, 3D modeling and rendering, and his current responsibilities.

I then joined the SFU presentation. Representatives talked about their performing arts programs, including having current students talk about their experiences with the programs. The programs sound interesting and seem very versatile. This is useful for me as it will be something to consider when I'm thinking about universities.

Overall, the Digital Media Youth Expo was very enjoyable, and I found a lot of the information useful and interesting. I am glad I had the opportunity to participate, and I am looking forward to attending next year.

**By Maren Brophy, Grade 11 DMA Student**

I have attended previous DMA Expos, and I have always enjoyed the event. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year's Expo was a virtual event.

One of my first impressions of this year's Expo was how well the online space had been set up, with the entire Expo centered around one main Zoom lobby where participants and presenters could see a schedule of all the different events. Included was a list of separate breakout rooms that attendees could easily navigate to attend different presentations and connect with industry professionals and schools.

The Expo also featured a fantastic list of guest speakers and presenters. The first set of presenters included representatives from major studios here in Vancouver, such as

Industrial Light & Magic and Electronic Arts, who discussed working in the industry, applying for jobs and the animation process.

At the Industrial Light & Magic session, a lead animator discussed his experience working in visual effects and animation as a whole. It was interesting to learn that animation uses a vast amount of reference footage. I knew that animators used references to help them achieve realistic movement in their animation, but I was surprised to find out just how much footage is used when working on animating. The lead animator also discussed what studios might be looking for in a portfolio. As an inspiring animator, it was insightful and informative to hear firsthand about working in animation.

The next set of presenters were from colleges and universities. I listened to the Emily Carr University of Art and Design and the Capilano University presentations. Representatives from both schools discussed their different program offerings and gave details and examples of what students could expect from these courses.

One of the helpful things about these presentations is that I learned more about the schools' programs and application process. I found that when doing some early post-secondary research, information on certain programs can be challenging to find. These presentations helped clarify things and gave me the opportunity to ask faculty members my questions. In addition, breakout rooms allowed students to connect with and ask teachers and industry professionals questions.

Overall, the DMA Expo was an amazing event that gave me so many unique opportunities to connect with people who are just as passionate about digital media as I am. Many thanks to all the people involved with organizing and contributing to this event and congratulations on another amazing EXPO!