

The Young Italian Artist Behind the Latest Ice Age Movie

Federico Ghelli (September 09, 2016)



From Super Mario drawings to the production of a blockbuster movie. Riccardo Renna offers yet another example of the young Italians who succeed in the United States.

The regular business trips Riccardo Renna's father used to go on would later help him develop a curiosity for drawing and computers. Ricky, as he prefers to be called, was born in Santiago, Chile, but then spent the majority of his childhood between Rome and Washington. During those trips, Super Mario became his companion and favorite character to sketch.

"There was something about shooting fireballs while sporting the manliest mustache of all time," he says.



In 2015 his passion for animation turned into a profession when Renna joined the Blue Sky team for the production of [Ice Age: Collision Course](#) [2]. Along with 600 other people, Renna brought characters like Manny, the stubborn mammoth and the acorn-obsessed, saber-toothed squirrel Scrat to life.

“It was like working with celebrities. Giving life to the characters that I knew for such a long time was simply amazing,” he says. Renna started his journey with animation in 2009 at the [Ringling College of Art and Design](#) [3] in Sarasota, Fla. After studying animation for four years, Renna earned a master's degree in computer animation at the [School of Visual Art](#) [4]s in New York in 2015. There, he produced a short film called “The Americano Returns,” which pays homage to his Italian origins.

However the biggest opportunity of his life arrived in 2012, when he was hired as an intern for [Blue Sky Studios](#) [5]. There, Renna met his mentor, Nick Bruno, and developed strong connections with renowned animators.

“I entered a world of artists who are great at what they do,” he says. “With time, I was also able to see their determination, which helped me fall in love with animation even more.”

Now, Renna is working on the production of Ferdinand, a sensitive bull who prefers the soothing smell of flowers to the cruelty of bullfights. According to Renna, this new project will give him more freedom than Ice Age. “During the production of Ice Age we were working with established characters that didn’t allow for much change. Ferdinand, instead, is a new character so we can explore different options with him,” he says.

Renna has the goal to develop even more content and learn everything he can with Blue Sky. Living in New York gave him the chance to meet several important people and understand more about the movie production business.

“The animation world is extremely competitive,” he says. “Working next to some of the best animators is flattering and exciting. I hope to learn a lot from them and grow even more in the field that I love.”

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[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_Age:_Collision_Course

[3] <http://www.ringling.edu/>

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_of_Visual_Arts

[5] <http://blueskystudios.com/>