

SKILLS

DESIGN

TECHNICAL

Figma

Design systems & tokens

Prototyping

Typography

Motion & interaction

Accessibility

Swift/SwiftUI

TypeScript

ReactJS

SolidJS

Electron

CSS/animation

three.js

Python

C++

Machine Learning

WORK EXPERIENCE

Duolingo

Software Engineer — iOS Client

New York, NY
Aug 2025 – Present

- Collaborated with designers, UX researchers, and PMs to explore interaction models for **Visual Novels**, a ground-up iOS redesign of Duolingo Stories. Defined its design system and architected the component layer for rapid iteration.
- Migrated legacy feature Stories onto Duolingo's shared design-system components and built snapshot tests that diffed rendered screens against Figma, catching pixel-level regressions before review.
- Shipped Stories features from Figma to A/B-tested release across 100M+ learners (e.g. an animated skip prompt with entrance/dismiss transitions and a countdown timer) driving stat-sig gains in retention and learning.
- Conceived and built rapid prototypes that later became staffed roadmap work, including an internal engagement dashboard and new iOS experiences.
- Re-architected the iOS Course experience around a new API, cutting **\$500K+** in annual bandwidth costs with zero visible change to the client.

Software Engineering Intern — iOS Client

Jun – Sep 2024

- Implemented and launched Cross Math, an iOS game featuring constraint-programming puzzle generation, a real-time shape backend, and a responsive Swift UI. Advanced from CEO-approved prototype to production release.

Software Engineering Thrive Intern — Full-Stack Web

Jun – Aug 2023

- Designed Conlang Creator in Figma, from wireframes to hi-fi mockups, then built the production React app with polished animations, transitions, and interaction details.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Personal Site — Interactive Creative Lab & Design System

carissaott.com · 2026

- Designed in Figma, then built a documented design system whose typography, color, spacing, elevation, and motion tokens render directly from live CSS variables.
- Built a physics-based three.js mascot with draggable ragdoll limbs, plus FLIP transitions and scroll-driven motion timed by the design system.
- Created six interactive UI experiments—including a command palette, ghost-text autocomplete, animated code diff, and streaming-token renderer—all keyboard accessible, reduced-motion aware, and open source.

Waddl — Desktop Companion UI for AI Coding Agents

2026

- Designed and built a desktop interface that makes AI coding agents easier to understand through glanceable progress, repository visualization, checkpoints, and organized conversations.
- Built in **Electron and TypeScript** as a typed component system on custom design tokens, with streaming thinking blocks, animated terminal output, collapsible diffs, and carefully tuned micro-interactions.

Theramind — AI Workflow Automation for Therapists

2025

- Designed the product in Figma and led front-end development. **2nd Place**, AI Agent Excellence & Innovation — Stanford TreeHacks (\$2.5K).

Vertiflex — Wearable Vertebrae Rehabilitation Device

BMES · Software Lead · 2023–24

- Designed patient and surgeon interfaces in Figma, then built the React application for a clinical rehabilitation device with real-time feedback; led the software team and developed ML for spinal-alignment prediction. **1st Place**, BMES Technical Project Symposium; 3rd Place & \$3K NSF prize, SB3C National Bioengineering Conference.

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Graduated Mar 2025

B.S. Cognitive Science, Specialization in Computer Science · Minor in Data Science Engineering

GPA 3.9 · Coursework: Computer Graphics & Animation, Machine Learning, Data Structures & Algorithms, Web Development

RESEARCH, HONORS & AWARDS

- Speech & Cognitive Development Lab, UCLA** — Researcher (2024–Present). Developed transformer-based speech models in PyTorch on 300+ hours of child language recordings; first author on two publications (*JSLHR*, in press; *CogSci Proceedings 2025*).
- TEDx Speaker** — "Building a Safer Headspace," a talk on Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (3,300+ views on YouTube).