Karthik Desingh, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Department of Computer Science and Engineering | Minnesota Robotics Institute (MnRI) University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

■ kdesingh[at]umn[dot]edu | ★ karthikdesingh.com

Education	
University of Michigan PH.D. COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING • Advisor: Chad Jenkins • Committee: Dmitry Berenson, Benjamin Kuipers, Edwin Olson, Gaurav Sukhatme • Thesis: Efficient Belief Propagation for Perception and Manipulation in Clutter	Ann Arbor, MI, USA 2016 - 2020
Brown University MS COMPUTER SCIENCE Advisor: Chad Jenkins	Providence, RI, USA 2013 - 2015
International Institute of Information Technology MS COMPUTER SCIENCE • Advisor: K. Madhava Krishna • Thesis: Visual Saliency and Next Best View Models for Object Recognition and Search	Hyderabad, India 2010 - 2013
Osmania University BE ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATION ENGINEERING	Hyderabad, India 2004 - 2008
Professional Experience	
Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University 2020-2022 Postdoctoral Scholar, University of Washington, PI: Dieter Fox 2016-2020 Graduate Student Research Assistant, University of Michigan, PI: Chad Jenkins 2013-2015 Graduate Student Research Assistant, Brown University, PI: Chad Jenkins 2014-2014 Summer Intern, Google Summer of Code, PI: Zoltan Csaba Marton (DLR Germany) 2010-2013 Graduate Student Research Assistant, IIIT Hyderabad, PI: K Madhava Krishna 2008-2010 Software Engineer, Capgemini, Chennai	
Publications	
Conference Publications	

- C13. Aaron Walsman, Muru Zhang, Klemen Kotar, Karthik Desingh, Ali Farhadi, Dieter Fox, "Break and Make: Interactive Structural Understanding Using LEGO Bricks," European Conference on Computer Vision. (ECCV) 2022.
- C12. Wentao Yuan, Chris Paxton, Karthik Desingh, and Dieter Fox, "SORNet: Spatial Object-Centric Representations for Sequential Manipulation," Proceedings of the Conference on Robot Learning. (CoRL) 2021, Finalist best systems paper.
- C11. Junha Roh, Karthik Desingh, Ali Farhadi, and Dieter Fox, "LanguageRefer: Spatial-Language Model for 3D Visual Grounding," Proceedings of the Conference on Robot Learning. (CoRL) 2021.
- C10. Jana Pavlasek, Stanley Lewis, Karthik Desingh, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins. "Parts-based articulated object localization in clutter using belief propagation." In IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems, pp. 10595-10602. (IROS) 2020.
- C9. Karthik Desingh, Shiyang Lu, Anthony Opipari, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins. "Factored pose estimation of articulated objects using efficient nonparametric belief propagation." In International Conference on Robotics and Automation, pp. 7221-7227. (ICRA) 2019.

- C8. Zhen Zeng, Yunwen Zhou, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, and Karthik Desingh. "Semantic mapping with simultaneous object detection and localization." In IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems, pp. 911-918. (IROS) 2018.
- C7. Mehran Maghoumi, Joseph J. LaVioia, **Karthik Desingh**, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins. "Gemsketch: Interactive image-guided geometry extraction from point clouds." *In IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation*, pp. 2184-2191. (ICRA) 2018.
- C6. Sai R. Gouravajhala, Jinyeong Yim, **Karthik Desingh**, Yanda Huang, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, and Walter S. Lasecki. "Eureca: Enhanced understanding of real environments via crowd assistance." *In Sixth AAAI conference on human computation and crowdsourcing.* (HCOMP) 2018.
- C5. Nediyana Daskalova, **Karthik Desingh**, Alexandra Papoutsaki, Diane Schulze, Han Sha, and Jeff Huang. "Lessons learned from two cohorts of personal informatics self-experiments." *In the proceedings of the ACM on interactive, mobile, wearable and ubiquitous technologies 1, no. 3: 1-22. (UbiComp) 2017.*
- C4. **Karthik Desingh**, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, Lionel Reveret, and Zhiqiang Sui. "Physically plausible scene estimation for manipulation in clutter." *In IEEE-RAS 16th International Conference on Humanoid Robots, pp. 1073-1080.* (Humanoids) 2016.
- C3. Zhiqiang Sui, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, and **Karthik Desingh**. "Axiomatic particle filtering for goal-directed robotic manipulation." *In IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems, pp. 4429-4436. (IROS) 2015.*
- C2. **Karthik Desingh**, K. Madhava Krishna, Deepu Rajan, and C. V. Jawahar. "Depth really Matters: Improving Visual Salient Region Detection with Depth." *In British Machine Vision Conference, pp. 1-11. (BMVC) 2013*.
- C1. **Karthik Desingh**, Akhil Nagariya, and K. Madhava Krishna. "Viewpoint based mobile robotic exploration aiding object search in indoor environment." *In Proceedings of the Eighth Indian Conference on Computer Vision, Graphics and Image Processing*, pp. 1-8. (ICVGIP) 2012.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- J3. Thomas Cohn, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, **Karthik Desingh**, and Zhen Zeng. "TSBP: Tangent Space Belief Propagation for Manifold Learning." *In IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems. (RA-L) 2020, Presented at IROS 2020.*
- J2. **Karthik Desingh**, Shiyang Lu, Anthony Opipari, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins. "Efficient nonparametric belief propagation for pose estimation and manipulation of articulated objects." *Science Robotics 4, no. 30 (2019)*.
- J1. Zhiqiang Sui, Lingzhu Xiang, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, and **Karthik Desingh**. "Goal-directed robot manipulation through axiomatic scene estimation." *In the International Journal of Robotics Research 36, no. 1: 86-104. (IJRR) 2017.*

PEER REVIEWED WORKSHOPS

- W10. Wentao Yuan, Chris Paxton, **Karthik Desingh**, and Dieter Fox, "SORNet: Spatial Object-Centric Representations for Sequential Manipulation," *ICRA 2022 Workshop on Scaling Robot Learning* Finalist best workshop paper.
- W9. Anthony Opipari, Jana Pavlasek, Chao Chen, Shoutian Wang, **Karthik Desingh**, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Differentiable Nonparametric Belief Propagation," *ICRA 2022 Workshop on Robotic Perception and Mapping: Emerging Techniques* Oral presentation (2/46).
- W8. Wentao Yuan, Chris Paxton, **Karthik Desingh**, and Dieter Fox, "SORNet: Spatial Object-Centric Representations for Sequential Manipulation," *RSS 2021 Workshop on Declarative and Neurosymbolic Representations in Robot Learning and Control.*
- W7. Aaron T. Walsman, Muru Zhang, Adam Fishman, **Karthik Desingh**, Dieter Fox, and Ali Farhadi, "LegoTron: An Environment for Interactive Structural Understanding," *CVPR 2021 Embodied AI Workshop*.
- W6. **Karthik Desingh**, Jana Pavlasek, Cigdem Kokenoz, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Tracking Large Scale Articulated Models with Belief Propagation for Task Informed Grasping and Manipulation," *RSS 2019 Workshop: Task-Informed Grasping (TIG-II): From Perception to Physical Interaction* Best workshop paper.
- W5. Jana Pavlasek, **Karthik Desingh**, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Scene Understanding using Part-Based Object Affordances," *RSS 2019 Workshop: Women in Robotics*.
- W4. Sina Masnadi, Joseph J. LaViola, Jana Pavlasek, Xiaofan Zhu, **Karthik Desingh**, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Sketching Affordances for Human-in-the-loop Robotic Manipulation Tasks," *ICRA 2019 Workshop: 2nd Robot Team-mates Operating in Dynamic, Unstructured Environments (RT-DUNE).*

- W3. **Karthik Desingh**, Anthony Opipari, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Analysis of Goal-directed Manipulation in Clutter using Scene Graph Belief Propagation," *ICRA 2018 Workshop: Multimodal Robot Perception Perception, Inference and Learning for Joint Semantic, Geometric and Physical Understanding.*
- W2. **Karthik Desingh**, Mehran Maghoumi, Joseph J. LaViola, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Object Manipulation in Cluttered Scenes Informed by Physics and Sketching," *RSS* 2016 Workshop: Geometry and Beyond Representations, Physics and Scene Understanding for Robotics.
- W1. Zhiqiang Sui, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, and **Karthik Desingh**, "Axiomatic Scene Estimation for Robotic Manipulation," *ICRA 2015 Workshop: Robotic Hands, Grasping and Manipulation.*

PREPRINTS

- P3. Anthony Opipari, Chao Chen, Shoutian Wang, Jana Pavlasek, **Karthik Desingh**, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Differentiable Nonparametric Belief Propagation," *arXiv* 2021.
- P2. Sina Masnadi, Joseph J. LaViola, Xiaofan Zhu, **Karthik Desingh**, Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "A Sketch-Based System for Human-Guided Constrained Object Manipulation," *arXiv* 2019.
- P1. **Karthik Desingh**, Anthony Opipari, and Odest Chadwicke Jenkins, "Pull Message Passing for Nonparametric Belief Propagation," *arXiv 2018*.

Grant Writing Experience _____

- Co-authored a grant proposal for REU program with Dieter Fox (PI) as a supplement to an existing NSF-NRI Award #2024057, titled "Collaborative Research: NRI: FND: Graph Neural Networks for Multi-Object Manipulation," 2022, Awarded \$16,000.
- Authored a research proposal for undergraduate research project "Spatial and Geometrical Reasoning of Objects for Robot Task Planning" to UW Allen School Postdoc Research Award, Autumn 2021 cycle, Awarded \$10,000.
- Co-authored a grant proposal for REU program with Dieter Fox (PI) as a supplement to an existing *NSF-NRI Award* #2024057, titled "Collaborative Research: NRI: FND: Graph Neural Networks for Multi-Object Manipulation," 2021, Awarded \$8,000.
- Co-authored NSF-NRI grant proposal with Chad Jenkins (PI) and Joseph J. LaViola (PI) on "NRI: Collaborative Research: Sketching Geometry and Physics Informed Inference for Mobile Robot Manipulation in Cluttered Scenes," Award #1638047, 2016-2019, \$400,000.
- Co-authored NSF-NRI grant proposal with Chad Jenkins (PI) and Joseph J. LaViola (PI) on "NRI: Collaborative Research: Sketching and Inferring Affordances for Mobile Robot Manipulation in Cluttered Scenes," *Reviewed*, 2019.

Invited Talks & Presentations

- Oct 2022 Invited research talk, "Explicit and Implicit Object Representations for Robust and Generalized Perception in Robotics,"
 - Minnesota Robotics Institute (MnRI) Colloquium, Host: Nikos Papanikolopoulos , Minneapolis, MN
- Aug 2022 Invited research talk, "Robust and Generalized Perception Towards Mainstreaming Domestic Robots," IIIT Hyderabad, Host: K Madhava Krishna, Hyderabad, India
- Jun 2022 Invited research talk, "Robust and Generalized Perception Towards Mainstreaming Domestic Robots," ETH Zürich, Host: Suryansh Kumar, Zürich, Switzerland
- Mar 2022 Invited research talk, "Robust and Generalized Perception Towards Mainstreaming Domestic Robots," Microsoft, Host: Sai Vemprala, Seattle, WA (online)
- Feb 2022 Invited research talk, "Robust and Generalized Perception Towards Mainstreaming Domestic Robots," University of Minnesota, Host: Volkan Isler, Minneapolis, MN (online)
- Feb 2022 Invited research talk, "Robust and Generalized Perception Towards Mainstreaming Domestic Robots," Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Host: Jing Xiao, Worcester, MA (online)
- Jan 2022 Invited research talk, "Robust and Generalized Perception Towards Mainstreaming Domestic Robots," Simon Fraser University, Host: Steve Ko, Vancouver, BC Canada (online)
- Nov 2021 Invited research talk, "Learning Object-centric Representations for Robot Manipulation," Cornell Robotics Seminar, Host: Tapo Bhattacharjee, Ithaca, NY (online)

Sept 2021	Invited research talk, "Learning Object-centric Representations for Robot Manipulation,"
	IROS 2021, 5th Workshop on Semantic Policy and Action Representations for Autonomous Robots (SPAR), Prague
	Czech Republic (online)

- Aug 2021 **Research presentation**, "Object Pose Estimation and Tracking for Curiosity-Driven Object Exploration," Curious Minded Machines final project meeting, funded by Honda Research Institute (online)
- Nov 2019 Invited research talk, "Efficient Belief Propagation for Robot Manipulation in Clutter," Host: Dieter Fox, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- Aug 2019 Invited research talk, "Efficient Belief Propagation for Robot Manipulation in Clutter," Hosts: Gaurav Sukhatme and Joseph Lim, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
- Aug 2019 Invited research talk, "Efficient Belief Propagation for Robot Manipulation in Clutter," Host: Aaron Dollar, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- Apr 2019 Invited research talk, "Robots working in human environments," ML Conference, East Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI
- Jun 2019 Poster presentation, "Efficient nonparametric belief propagation for pose estimation and manipulation of articulated objects,"

 New England Manipulation Symposium, Columbia University, New York
- May 2019 Paper presentation, "Factored pose estimation of articulated objects using efficient nonparametric belief propagation,"

ICRA 2019, Montreal, Canada

Mar 2019 Invited research poster, "Factored pose estimation of articulated objects using efficient nonparametric belief propagation,"

Amazon Graduate Research Symposium, Seattle, WA

Nov 2018 **Poster presentation**, "Factored pose estimation of articulated objects using efficient nonparametric belief propagation,"

Michigan Al symposium, Ann Arbor, MI

Oct 2018 Research talk, "Factored pose estimation of articulated objects using efficient nonparametric belief propagation,"

Michigan Al honors competition, Ann Arbor, MI

- Oct 2018 Poster presentation, "NRI: Collaborative Research: Sketching Geometry and Physics Informed Inference for Mobile Robot Manipulation in Cluttered Scenes,"

 NSF-NRI PI meeting, Arlington, VA
- May 2018 Paper presentation, "GemSketch: Interactive Image-Guided Geometry Extraction from Point Clouds," ICRA 2018, Brisbane, Australia
- Nov 2017 Poster presentation, "A Nonparametric Approach to Scene Estimation with Inter-object Relations towards Goal-directed Manipulation,"

 Engineering Graduate Symposium, Ann Arbor, MI
- Jun 2017 Poster presentation, "A Nonparametric Approach to Scene Estimation with object-object interactions towards Goal-directed Manipulation,"

 New England Manipulation Symposium, North Eastern University, Boston, MA
- Nov 2016 Paper presentation, "Physically Plausible Scene Estimation for Manipulation in Clutter,"
- Jul 2016 Poster presentation, "Object Manipulation in Cluttered Scenes Informed by Physics and Sketching,"
- RSS 2016 Workshop: Geometry and Beyond Representations, Physics and Scene Understanding for Robotics,

 Ann Arbor, MI
- May 2015 **Poster presentation**, "Axiomatic Scene Estimation for Robotic Manipulation," ICRA Ph.D. forum, Seattle, WA
- May 2015 **Poster presentation**, "Axiomatic Scene Estimation for Robotic Manipulation," New England Manipulation Symposium, North Eastern University, Boston, MA

Mentoring_____

Mentees who co-authored above listed publications/articles are indicated with *.

2022-2022 2020-2022 2020-2022 2020-2022 2018-2020	Carolina Higuera Aaron T. Walsman* Junha Roh* Xiangyun Meng Jana Pavlasek*	Ph.D. (Inclusion@RSS), Univ of Washington Ph.D., Univ of Washington Ph.D., Univ of Washington Ph.D., Univ of Washington Ph.D., Univ of Michigan	
2022-	Carl Winge	MS, Univ of Minnesota	
2022-	Chahyon Ku	MS, Univ of Minnesota	
2022-2022	Srivatsa Satyanarayana	MS, Univ of Washington	
2018-2022	Anthony Opipari*	MS, Univ of Michigan	now Ph.D., Univ of Michigan
2019-2020	Chao Chen*	MS, Univ of Michigan	now Ph.D., at NYU
2020-2020	Shoutian Wang*	MS, Univ of Michigan	
2019-2020	Neha Pusalkar	MS, Univ of Michigan	now Ph.D., Oregon State Univ
2018-2019	Shiyang Lu*	MS, Univ of Michigan	now Ph.D., Rutgers
2018-2019	Xiaofan Zhu*	MS, Univ of Michigan	
2017-2018	Yunwen Zhou*	MS, Univ of Michigan	now at Google
2017-2018	Chandana Neerukonda	MS, Univ of Michigan	now at Ford Motor Company
2022-2022	Chahyon Ku	Undergrad, Univ of Washington	now MS, Univ of Minnesota
2022-2022	Noah Ponto	Undergrad, Univ of Washington	
2020-2021	Muru Zhang*	Undergrad, Univ of Washington	
2021-2021	Rachel Soto-Garcia	Undergrad (REU), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	
2021-2021	Ruthvik S. Mondreti	Undergrad, Univ of Washington	
2021-2021	Yi Ru (Helen) Wang	Undergrad (Inclusion@RSS), Univ of Toronto	
2021-2021	Julia Chae	Undergrad (Inclusion@RSS), Univ of Toronto	
2019-2020	Thomas Cohn*	Undergrad, Univ of Michigan	
2019-2019	Zhiming Ruan	Undergrad, Univ of Michigan	now at Vicarious
2019-2019	Cigdem Kokenoz*	Undergrad, Univ of Michigan	now MS, Univ of Michigan
2017-2018	Anthony Opipari*	Undergrad, Univ of Michigan	now Ph.D., Univ of Michigan
2012-2013	Akhil Nagariya*	Undergrad, IIIT-Hyderabad	now Ph.D., Texas A&M

Teaching Experience _____

Spr 2022	CSE 571: Robotics, Guest Lecturer	Univ of Washington
Win 2022	Faculty Instructor(s): Dieter Fox, course page TECHIN 516 Robotics Lab 1: Robotic Sensing And Mobility, Guest Lecturer Faculty Instructor(s): John Raiti	Univ of Washington
Spr 2021	CSE 571: Al-Based Mobile Robotics, Guest Lecturer & Course Staff Faculty Instructor(s): Dieter Fox, course page, project videos	Univ of Washington
2020-2021	CSE 590R: Robotics Seminar, Co-instructor - Fall'20, Win'20, Spr'21, Fall'21 Faculty Instructor(s): Dieter Fox, Maya Cakmak, course page	Univ of Washington
Win 2021	TECHIN 516 Robotics Lab 1: Robotic Sensing And Mobility, Guest Lecturer Faculty Instructor(s): Maru Cabrera	Univ of Washington
F'19-Sp'20		Univ of Michigan
Spr 2019	EECS 467: Autonomous Robotics Laboratory, Graduate Student Instructor Faculty Instructor(s): Chad Jenkins, project videos	Univ of Michigan
Fall 2015	CS 1951-C: Designing Humanity Centered Robots, Teaching Assistant Faculty Instructor(s): Michael Littman, Ian Gonsher, course page	Brown University
Fall 2014	CS 2951-P: Human Robot Interaction Seminar course, Teaching Assistant Faculty Instructor(s): Chad Jenkins, course page	Brown University
Fall 2012	CSE 478: Mobile Robotics, Teaching Assistant Faculty Instructor(s): K Madhava Krishna	IIIT - Hyderabad

Service, Outreach & Professional Development

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Associate Editor IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Robots and Systems (IROS) 2022.
- Program Committee Member International Joint Conferences on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI) 2020-2024.
- Program Committee Member International Conference on Robot Learning (CoRL) 2020-2021.

PEER REVIEWING

- Journal Reviewer IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters (RA-L)
- Journal Reviewer Autonomous Robots Journal (AURO)
- · Conference Reviewer IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)
- Conference Reviewer IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Robots and Systems (IROS)
- Conference Reviewer Robotics: Science and Systems (RSS)
- Conference Reviewer IEEE-RAS International Conference on Humanoid Robotics (Humanoids)
- Conference Reviewer AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence
- Conference Reviewer International Joint Conferences on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI)
- Conference Reviewer International Conference on Robot Learning (CoRL)
- Workshop Reviewer CVPR 2021 Workshop on 3D Vision and Robotics
- Workshop Reviewer Robotics: Science and Systems (RSS) Pioneers 2018, 2021

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

- Mentor, Inclusion@RSS Robotics: Science and Systems, 2022
- Mentor, Inclusion@RSS Robotics: Science and Systems, 2021
- Organizer, University of Washington Robotics Colloquium, University of Washington, Fall 2020 Fall 2021
- Application reviewer, Graduate Admission Committee, University of Washington, Fall 2021
- Mentor for applicants from historically marginalized groups, Pre-Application Review Service (PARS), University of Washington, Fall 2020
- Alumni mentor, Graduate Rackham International (GRIN) Speed Mentoring Event, University of Michigan, Fall 2020
- Robotics lab tour organizer, Explore Graduate Studies (EGS) Workshop, University of Michigan, Spring 2019
- Robotics lab tour organizer, GEECS (Girls in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science), University of Michigan, Spring 2018
- Student committee member, Graduate Admission Committee, University of Michigan, Fall 2018
- Staff mentor for freshmen, University Mentorship Program, University of Michigan, Fall 2018
- Robotics lab tour organizer, CS Kick Start Program, University of Michigan, Fall 2018
- Robotics lab tour organizer, CS visit day, University of Michigan, Spring 2017
- Graduate student member, Graduate Employee Organization (GEO), University of Michigan, 2016-2020

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Participated in workshop on Anti-Black Racism organized within Robotics Groups in Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Washington, 2020-2021.
- Participated in Mentorship Training Workshop hosted by MolES DEI Committee and the Undergraduate Research Program at the University of Washington, Winter 2021.
- Completed "Cultivating a Culture of Respect" misconduct training facilitated by UM Robotics Institute, Fall 2019.
- Participated in RAS Women In Engineering (WIE) Breakfast as part of IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) 2019, at Montreal.

Press and Media Coverage _____

- Science Robotics Interview "Can computer vision teach robots to think before they act?" link
- Michigan News "A quicker eye for robotics to help in our cluttered, human environments" link
- **EEWorld Online** "A quicker eye for robotics to help in our cluttered, human environments" link
- Tech Explore "A quicker eye for robotics to help in our cluttered, human environments" link

- Futurity "A quicker eye for robotics to help in our cluttered, human environments" link
 Venture Beat "Before we put \$100 billion into AI" link
- Michigan AI Blog "Personal Robots: Why is perception important?" link