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Art 74

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Final

Artist Statement

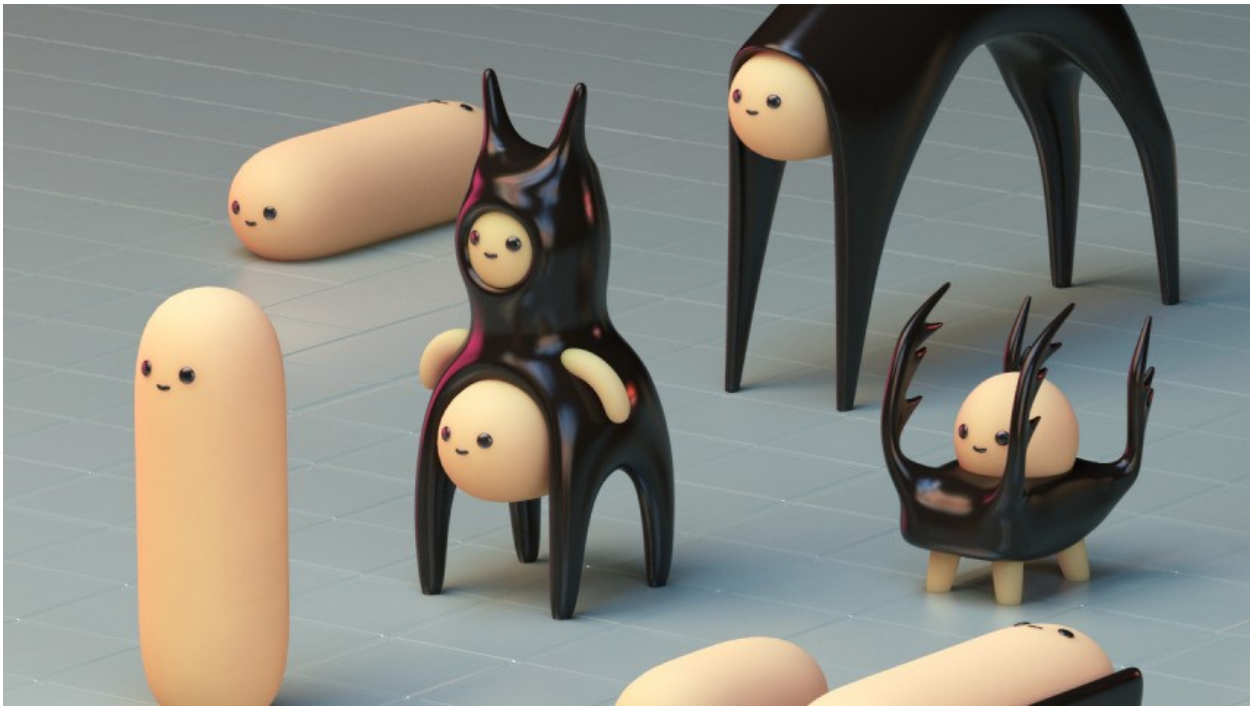
I remember looking at images others have produced and going “wow, I want to be able to make that too”. And so here I am, a 3D artist. I chose 3D renders as my medium because it’s a nice mix between logic and creativity. Whether I am making models or creating materials, there is always a layer of logical thinking on top of the creative process.

I also play games… and make art, and sometimes, I do both at the same time. Making materials for 3D rendering is like playing a game. The software provides me the rules, but the possibilities are endless. For any works of 3D, the model defines the form, and the material determines the look. By manipulating materials, I can create photorealistic renders with just a subtle hint of fantasy.

I often dream of living inside of a game, a movie, or an animation. While I cannot possibly physically exist in that world, what I can do is to bring that world into mine by juxtaposing materials. These materials can be as simple as a bumpy wooden table, or it can be a piece of glowy jaded that is not physically plausible. And this is what I want to show in my work: a fantasy world that coexist with reality.

Artist Inspiration

Jun Seo Hahm



Jun is an animation director, graphic designer and media artist based in Seoul, Korea. Jun has a deep interest in biology, and he sees entertainment in creating biology-inspired fictional creatures. At first, they were just drawings, but then Jun made them into models, and eventually renders with tools like 3ds Max, and ZBrush.

While any person can tell that these “things” aren’t actually real, but we can still immediately register them as creatures potentially living in another world, and it’s all because of the material. Jun’s works is one of my early encounter with what’s called Subsurface Scattering, abbreviated SSS. What it does in this case is to create a skin-like material on these creatures. If I were to block a flashlight with my thumb, it would glow red. This is because the light is going through the surface of my thumb and scattering across the layers of blood under my skin,

creating the red glow. This is exactly what an SSS shader is, it simulates a layer of color under the surface. To me, Jun's work showcase the effect of SSS in a way that is very easily understood, and soon afterwards I began incorporating this shader into my own work.

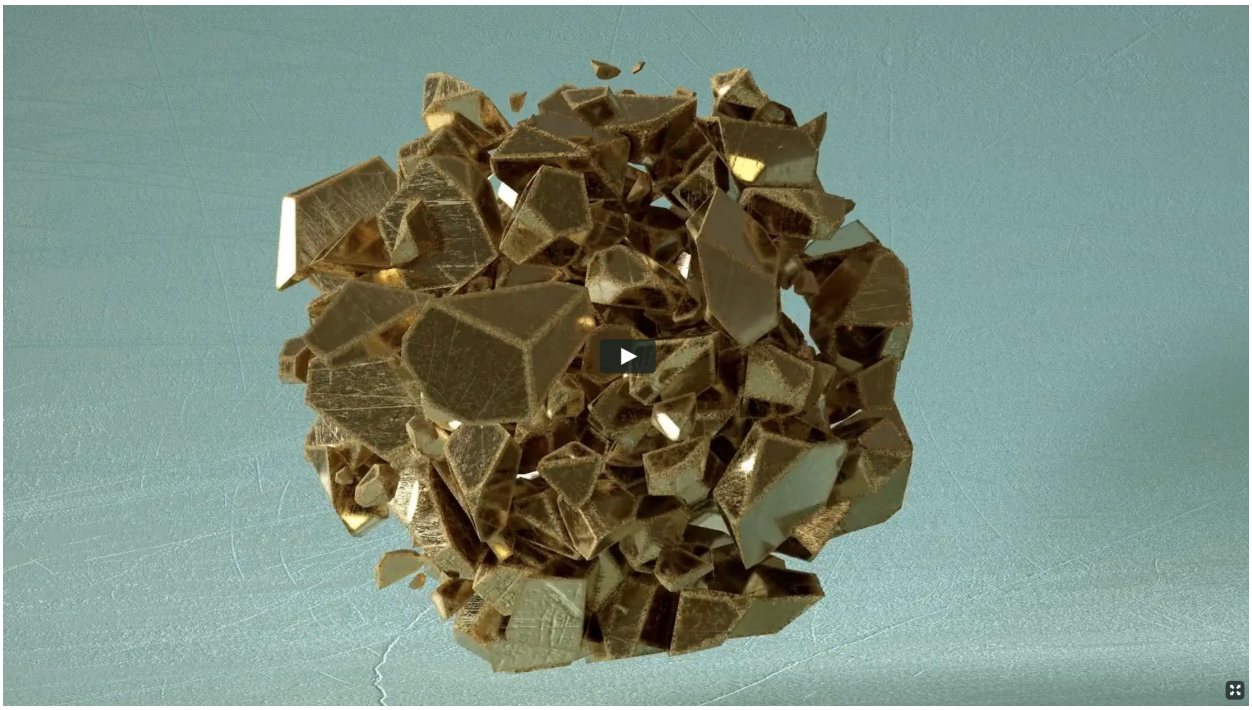
Jun's work itself embodies the crossover of fantasy and reality. He portrays the little imaginary beings existing in a realistic setting. What makes him stand out to me is his claim that "my work doesn't mean anything". I think too often I as artist try to incorporate meanings into what I am doing, overlooking the fact that these meanings actually act as restrictions that hinder my creative freedom.

Mohamed Chahin

Mohamed makes these low-poly cute renders capturing unlikely events in our lives. He's a big inspiration for me, aesthetically. Mohamed is a big user of the software Blender, which I

also use. He is a notable figure in the Blender community, and that alone can speak for his influence in the rendering scene. I made some low-poly renders following his style, and to my surprise, it was *hard*. Lighting and material becomes especially important due to the lack of geometry to cover up flaws.

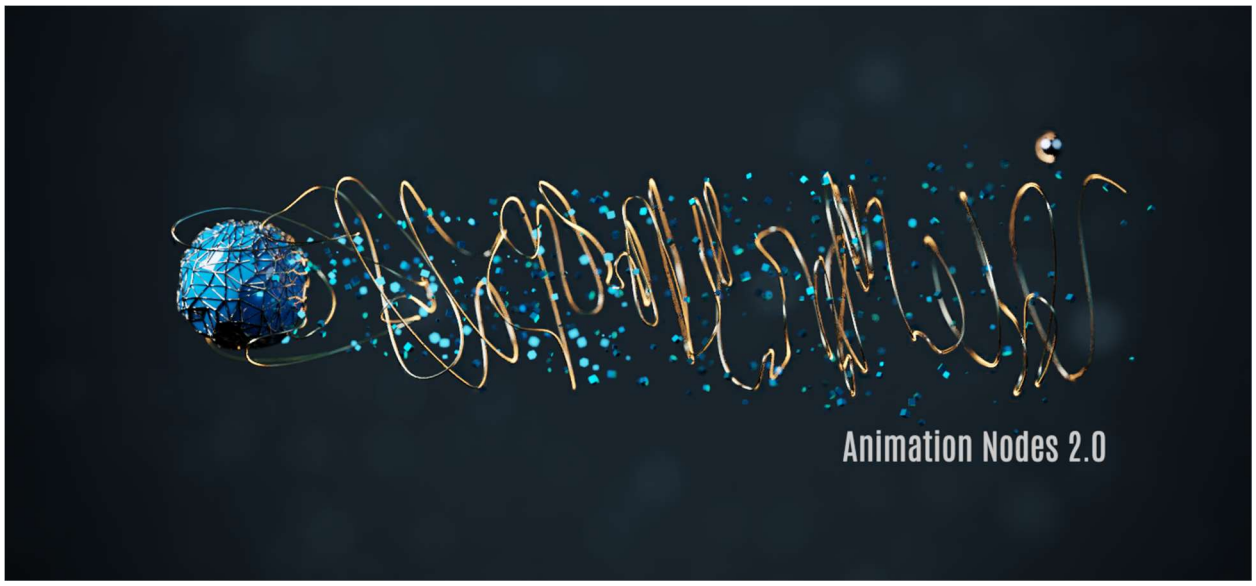
Alex Mcleod



This person's work is generative in nature. Generative means it involves some degree of logical control, and probably needed some form of coding. Generative content is one of my focuses. There is a lot that can be done purely with generated patterns and models. There are also plenty of tools out there that focuses on generating rather than making, like Houdini. The process of making materials on Sketchfab was a generative one. There was no real texture applied, only generated patterns, and yet, it could achieve stunning results.

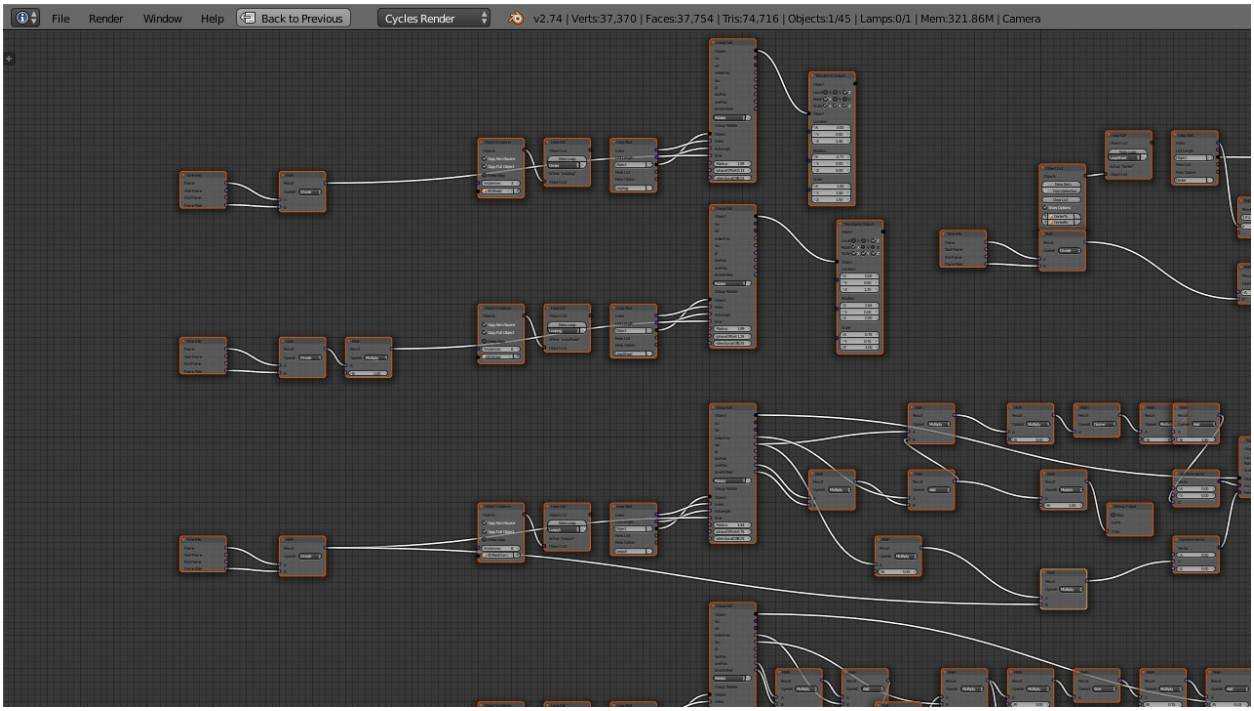
Research

Doing things using a node-based program like Max or Houdini is very much like programming. For this reason, I like to call these programs “visual coding”. Similar to how tools like Scratch and BYOB help beginners learn the logic behind codes, node based programs help creative minds visualize the connection between functions.



Blender, my main tool, has an addon called Animation Nodes, and it functions like Houdini inside of Blender. Something like this can be challenging at first, because it drifts away from how conventional artist work. Instead of making things by hand, a node based system instruct the computer to generate content for us. This is very similar to our Project 5, but instead of writing code to generate images, wouldn’t it be easier if we could simply connect a preset of nodes to do the same?

Screenshot of the node network that created this animation: https://imgur.com/gallery/3MApw



I see myself as a technical person, and something like this can be extremely fun and rewarding to just dive in and mess around with. A lot of artwork today is not just art, but also the fruit of science. As the line between scientist and artist is getting blurred, I see a trend that art is getting more and more involved with technology. As a digital media artist, I feel the need to learn tools like animation nodes as to not be behind everyone else. I believe the understanding of how to use a system like this could very well be mandatory for artists in the future.