



SIGGRAPH 2007 SPECIAL EDITION

# ANIMATION FLASH

An ANIMATION WORLD NETWORK Publication

On the Internet since 1996: [www.AWN.com](http://www.AWN.com)

JULY 30, 2007

## SIGGRAPH 2007 Computer Animation Festival Sets Record



The Computer Animation Festival jury selected from a record 905 submissions for exemplary use of computer-generated imagery and animation, and compelling storytelling. With show categories

ranging from animation to research, this year's submissions originate from countries across the globe, including the France, Germany, Japan, Poland, South Korea, Switzerland, the U.K. and New Zealand. Also, for the first time in the history of SIGGRAPH, two of the award-winning films

are student entries. SIGGRAPH 2007 also marks the first time filmmakers were able to submit high-definition video to the selection jury, which greatly increased the

[See CAF Sets Record, Page 22]

## Schaub to Give Animation Mentor Commencement Address

AnimationMentor.com, the online animation school, is holding its second graduation concurrent with SIGGRAPH 2007. Sony Pictures Imageworks' David Schaub (*Surf's Up*, *The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*) will present the inspirational address at the San Diego ceremony. Students from 17 countries will graduate from the online school, which propelled more than 60% of its first class into coveted studio animator positions.

"By holding graduation simultaneous with the industry's premiere event, we are saying that we are here to stay, right in the middle of things," said Animation Mentor president/ceo, Bobby S. Beck. "We are so excited that David will present the commencement speech, not only because he is such a versatile and important talent, but also because of his reputation for helping artists create great work."

Since joining Sony Pictures Imageworks in 1995, Schaub has served as an animator, animation director and animation supervisor on many notable feature

[See Animation Mentor , Page 23]

## CG Animators to Compete for FJORG!

SIGGRAPH officials, along with AMD, DreamWorks Animation and HP, offered details for the world's first international FJORG! competition: an "iron animator" event in which 15 competing teams from around the world will have 32 hours to create the world's best character-driven animation in front of a live,

[See FJORG! CG Contest, Page 23]

### The Digital Eye

B. Desowitz chats with Paul Debevec p.2

### Transformers Explored

Transformers, behind-the-scenes p.4

### Personal Supercomputing

NVIDIA presents new-line technology p.4

### Papers Program Events

Innovative research p.5

### Winning Animation

Taylor Jessen examines 3 shorts p.6

### Guerilla Studio

Opportunities to create art p.11

### Spider-Man 3 Panel

Behind-the-scenes perspective p.12

### Frantic Debuts Software

Demonstration of new products p.13

### Art on Humanity, Nature

Alternative world views p.14

### Houdini 9 Beta Launches

CG software p.15

### Co-Located Tech Events

Siggraph partners with 5 events p.15

### Global Eyes Art Gallery

Paul Pezko highlights artwork p.16

### Syd Mead Keynotes

Softimage user event p.19

### Entis Featured Speaker

Speaks on industry/commerce p.20

### McCloud Featured Speaker

Speaks on art p.21

### Ramachandran Featured Speaker

Speaks on research p.21

### morpheme 1.1 Released

New software p.24

### GenArts' Plug-ins

Featuring Sapphire Plug-ins p.24

### Microsoft Surface Featured

Surface computing products p.25

# The Digital Eye: Reshaping SIGGRAPH's CAF

By Bill Desowitz



Image courtesy of Deron Yamada. © 2004 DY4367.

**Bill Desowitz:** You've appeared at SIGGRAPH many times and have presented some very influential papers on lighting research. What's it been like chairing the Computer Animation Festival for the first time?

**Paul Debevec:** The thing that people tell you when you accept this position is that the real work comes after all the pieces are selected. And now I'm really realizing what they mean by that. The thing I had basically put together in my mind for the couple of years that I had been thinking of doing this someday was who do I really want on the jury and how do I want to run the jury meetings so we can get the best information out of the jurors [Carter Emmart, Nickson Fong, Michael Kass, Randal Kleiser, Gavin Miller, Shelley Page, Jay Redd and Habib Zaragarpour], so we can get the best possible selections. And all of that came off without a hitch. And then it becomes a really exciting process of production, where your material is coming from over a 100 different places from around the world, getting it on the most consistent format as possible and then sequencing it into the best possible show.

**BD:** Talk a little about some of the changes you've made for this year's show.

**PD:** We've tried to do our best for as much outreach as possible to all the different categories that we have. The SIGGRAPH Computer Animation Festival is not a typical animated shorts festival. There are actually eight submission categories and these include things from art and research and broadcast and scientific visualization. And I think we were successful in having a



Paul Debevec.

number of pieces in each of these categories, and at least one from each category in the Electronic Theater.

So we have a pretty fast paced show this year. I think there are about 41 pieces in the Electronic Theater, and that's definitely more than some other years. The longest piece is about six minutes. The other thing that I think is great is that every piece has something exciting about it:

amazing imagery or very new technique or it's competently executed. So we're hoping for an intellectually stimulating and aesthetically entertaining evening for the Electronic Theater.

**BD:** In recent years, there has been less emphasis on scientific technology. Given your expertise and research background, what can we look forward to that's innovative?

**PD:** We're very lucky to have submissions that push the boundaries of technology and show us things we've never seen before. To me, that's the most important thing. And the kinds of things that people are doing with computer graphics today are just inconceivable from even five years ago. One of the biggest areas of innovation has been in fluid simulation and water, and there are a couple of research pieces that look at that but also a number of studio making of pieces such as ILM's work on *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, and *Surfs Up*, with the surfing penguins that Sony Animation and Imageworks did. It's got absolutely beautiful water that's directable: they can actually treat those waves as characters that they can animate, but then the water does things that are completely believable. And it's a shorter sequence in the movie *300* but Scanline has some pretty amazing stuff and they have a very innovative fluid simulation rendering system there as well.

It's also a good year for digital characters as well, so we're going to see some photoreal humans: there's a pretty breathtaking making of *Children of Men* from Framestore CFC, with a nice breakdown of the birth sequence. It's a very nice mix of good old, traditional filmmaking and having the right things on set to get the performances out of the actors and then compositing in the right things to make it look exactly like it needs to.

**BD:** And some nice performance capture in the show too.

[See *The Digital Eye*, Page 3]

**[The Digital Eye from Page 2]**

**PD:** Absolutely. In fact, there's going to be a particular clip — which I think will be a highlight of the show — from the upcoming *Beowulf*, and Sony Imageworks sent in some stuff and the jury was extremely impressed by it.

**BD:** And, as we can see, everyone is benefiting from lighting and rendering advancements.

**PD:** They are more accessible and they are the kinds of things that filmmakers can take advantage of at this point. If you look at the Best of Show winner, *Ark*, you'll see very complex lighting effects going on — full on global illumination — and you get so into the story that you don't notice it but it contributes to the believability of this environment, which is supposed to be realistic. It's down to dust floating in a shaft of light to the right of the screen. Everything is beautifully animated and the lighting effects in every single shot are extremely well crafted.

These tools are really out there and people are taking artistic advantage of them, and it's really a strength of the Computer Animation Festival that you see pieces that are presenting some of this research for the first time, whether it's in animation or lighting or rendering, and then within a few years you're seeing it movies like *Ark*, where independent filmmakers are able to create a very new and novel vision. And then showing up in the coolest feature film effects out there as well.

**BD:** And how is your research going at USC's Institute for Creative Technologies?

**PD:** It's going well. We're showing two things at SIGGRAPH in the paper session. One of them is new face relighting technique where we do work with light stages where we take pictures of people from lots of different lighting directions and use that to characterize how the light reflects off and goes through their skin, so we can make digital actors look very much like real people do when we reflect light. And we've come up with a new technique

that actually uses one of these light stage data sets of them just in a neutral pose. So that you if have live-action footage of the actor, you can essentially just multiply on novel illumination. This is exciting because it takes some of our light stage techniques to an arena where you can apply it to pre-existing footage or things shot with traditional cameras.

The other cool thing that we've got is a 3-D display that actually makes a 5" three-dimensional image, which can either be a wire-frame or a photographically acquired light field of a real object that you put on a turntable. It makes it float in the air so that any number of people can walk around it 360 degrees and they see it with

binocular stereo from both eyes wearing no glasses and it's a fully interactive image, so you can actually manipulate it, rotate it around or animate the model. So we have a paper about that: some of the math behind it and some of the systems aspects of how we're doing the high-speed video projection, and we're going to be bringing it to the Emerging Technologies exhibit, where it will be on display. There seems to be a lot of energy in that area now, and it's cool to be doing a little work in it.

---

BILL DESOWITZ is editor of VFXWorld.

---

**MAGIC PLUGINS FOR FLASH ANIMATORS**

**Thumbnail Plugin**  
SPEED UP 80%  
LIP SYNC

You can view thumbnails of the frames of the selected graphic symbol contents. Clicking on the thumbnail, it changes the drawing on the stage (first frame property).

**Squash'n Stretch Plugin**  
MAINTAIN THE VOLUME

Apply squash and stretch to an instance without changing its volume. You can apply intuitively by dragging the knob or subtley by pressing the arrow buttons. You can also view the amount of squash/stretch of a selected object.

**COPY CUT PASTE IN PLACE PLUS! PLUGIN**  
PASTE EXACTLY IN PLACE!

We all know that paste in place in Flash from one instance to another doesn't work very well... If you edit an instance and paste in place an object, it gets its transformation (skew, size, rotation and position) and mess everything up. With this plugin this problem is solved! It places the object EXACTLY in the place it was copied, whatever the place it is.

MADE FOR:  
FLASH CS3  
FLASH 8  
FLASH MX 2004

This plugins and more.  
**DOWNLOAD NOW**  
[www.trickorscript.com](http://www.trickorscript.com)

**TRICKORSOFT**  
AMAZING PLUGINS FOR FLASH CHARACTER ANIMATORS

## SIGGRAPH 2007 to Explore *Transformers*



Bringing 30-foot-tall robots to life in *Transformers* incorporated some of the most complex modeling and animation ever attempted at Industrial Light & Magic (ILM). Taking place on Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2007, from 8:30–10:30 am, the experts behind the film will discuss their challenges and successes during a special session at

controllable pieces of geometry), entirely new graphic systems had to be developed to make this not only feasible, but also production friendly — a challenge not to be underestimated. From oil filters and axles to pistons and body panels; each piece had to have the ability to be individually controlled while operating

SIGGRAPH within a substantially complex system.

2007. ILM visual effects supervisor Scott Farrar, associate visual effects supervisor Russell Earl, animation director Scott Benza, digital production supervisor Jeff White and digital matte supervisor Richard Bluff will provide this unique inside glimpse into the making of this complex and visually stimulating film.

"If it was not for the collaborative community spirit of SIGGRAPH and Hollywood's industry leaders, many of these challenges, experiences, and successes would never be exposed to the public," stated SIGGRAPH 2007 Special Sessions co-chair Jerome Solomon. "We are very grateful to ILM for bringing this perspective to SIGGRAPH. This will be both an educational and exciting special session."

## NVIDIA Launches the Era of Personal Supercomputing

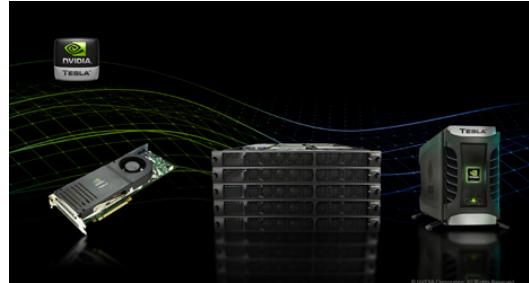
During SIGGRAPH 2007, NVIDIA (booth # 413, 513) will usher in the era of "personal supercomputing" with NVIDIA Tesla, the company's new line of processors for high-performance computing coupled with the latest NVIDIA Quadro professional graphics solutions.

With Tesla, computations that previously took hours, days or even weeks are now taking only minutes and in some cases computing in realtime — achieving performance improvements that are 45 to 415 times faster than traditional processors.

By pairing Tesla with NVIDIA Quadro graphics technology utilizing NVIDIA CUDA, a standard C development tool, NVIDIA is transforming standard workstations into "personal supercomputers" for creative professionals, designers, scientists, and engineers.

NVIDIA will be providing demos of its personal supercomputing solutions throughout the show floor in the following areas:

- Digital Content Creation — animation,



rendering, and broadcast

- Styling and Design — automotive and computer-aided design
- Science — molecular modeling, medical imaging, and simulation

NVIDIA will also be showcasing its next-generation rendering technology and highlighting the performance advantages of rendering using the newest G80 architecture in NVIDIA Quadro graphics. Demonstrations of the new "interactive lighting" technology and advancements in multi-GPU based rendering will be topics at the NVIDIA Gelato User Group meeting.

Also announced at the show will be

NVIDIA Gelato 2.2 professional film-quality rendering software, and the unveiling of *The Plush Life*, an in-house animated short created by the NVIDIA Digital Film Group, using Autodesk Maya software and rendered completely in Gelato software. The Plush Life will premiere Aug. 8 at the Gelato User Group meeting from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina, Santa Rosa Room. For more details or to RSVP, please email gelatoinfo@nvidia.com.

NVIDIA Gelato rendering software can be downloaded without charge at [www.gelatozone.com](http://www.gelatozone.com).

**NVIDIA Corp.** ([www.nvidia.com](http://www.nvidia.com)) is the worldwide leader in programmable graphics processor technologies. The company creates innovative, industry-changing products for computing, consumer electronics and mobile devices. NVIDIA is headquartered in Santa Clara, California, and has offices throughout Asia, Europe and the Americas.

# SIGGRAPH 2007 Papers Program Reveals Innovative Research

The SIGGRAPH 2007 Papers Program features the year's best research innovations in computer graphics and interactive techniques. Of 455 international submissions, a record-breaking 108 of the world's most prestigious papers will be presented at SIGGRAPH 2007.

Excellence of ideas and expected impact on the field were the primary acceptance criteria. Paper topics include the core areas of modeling, animation, rendering, and imaging, and also touch on related areas such as visualization, computer vision, human-computer interaction, and applications of computer graphics. Countries represented span the globe from Germany to Japan.

"The SIGGRAPH Papers review process, with its unique blend of internal and external reviewers, its long and detailed reviews, and its large face-to-face committee meeting, is recognized as being one of the fairest and most thorough peer review systems in computer science," stated Marc Levoy, SIGGRAPH 2007 Papers chair from Stanford University.

To promote a lively exchange of ideas during the program, Levoy introduced a system of per-paper discussants. Each paper in the program will be allotted 25 minutes, 20 minutes for presentation and five minutes for discussion of the paper, with the session chair serving as discussant.

Select highlights from the SIGGRAPH 2007 Papers Program:

## **Image Deblurring With Blurred/Noisy Image Pairs**

A novel method to deblur an image, with the help of another noisy image of the same scene. The paper also proposes new methods of de-ringaling the deconvoluted image.

Long Quan  
Lu Yuan  
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Heung-Yeung Shum  
Jian Sun  
Microsoft Research Asia

## **Scene Completion Using Millions of Photographs**

A method for filling holes in images using semantically and structurally similar scenes from a large Internet photo library.

Alexei A. Efros  
James Hays  
Carnegie Mellon University

## **Active Refocusing of Images and Videos**

A system for refocusing images and videos of dynamic scenes using a single-view depth estimation method. This method is based on the defocus of a sparse set of projected dots.

Francesc Moreno-Noguer  
CVLAB, Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne

Peter N. Belhumeur  
Shree K. Nayar  
Columbia University

## **Interactive Cutaway Illustrations of Complex 3D Models**

A system for authoring and viewing interactive cutaway illustrations of complex 3D models using conventions of traditional scientific and technical illustration.

Brian Curless  
Wilmot Li  
Lincoln Ritter  
David Salesin  
University of Washington

Maneesh Agrawala  
University of California, Berkeley

## **Prakash: Lighting-Aware Motion Capture Using Photosensing Markers and Multiplexed Illuminators**

A high-speed optical motion capture system also measures orientation and incident illumination via photosensing tags. Imperceptible tags work in natural lighting, to support on-set MoCap or realtime broadcast of virtual sets.

Philippe Bekaert  
Bert de Decker  
Universiteit Hasselt

Masahiko Inami  
University of Electrocommunications

Shree Nayar  
Columbia University

John Barnwell  
Vlad Branzoi  
Erich Bruns  
Paul Dietz  
Yuki Hashimoto  
Dylan Moore  
Hideaki Nii  
Michael Noland  
Ramesh Raskar  
Jay Summet  
Jonathan Westhues  
Yong Zhao  
Mitsubishi Electric Research Laboratories (MERL)

## **Bubbling and Frothing Liquids**

A method to generate bubbles from gas contained in liquids and simulate their dynamic behavior using a particle-based fluid simulation technique.

Mahesh Prakash  
Paul Cleary  
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

Bon Ki Koo  
Soon Hyoeng Pyo  
Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute

# SIGGRAPH '07 Computer Animation Winners: Argentines, Histamines and Quarantines

By Taylor Jessen

The 34th Annual SIGGRAPH conference, a festival of all things computer graphics-related, is coming to San Diego in August, and of the many computer-animated films submitted to the Computer Animation Festival branch of this year's event there are three that have been singled out for special mention. Honored with Best of Show is *Ark*, directed by Grzegorz Jonkajtys and Marcin Kobylecki; taking the Jury Honors prize is *Dreammaker* from animator/director Leszek Plichta; and winning the SIGGRAPH Award of Excellence is *En Tus Brazos* from co-directors Francois-Xavier Goby, Edouard Jouret and Matthieu Landour.

For the first time in the history of SIGGRAPH, two of the award-winning films are student entries: *Dreammaker*, which was produced at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Germany, and *En Tus Brazos*, which was made at Supinfo-com Valenciennes, France.

*VFXWorld* caught up with the filmmakers via email in late May. Representing *Ark* was Kobylecki. *Ark* is the latest from Platige Image, the Warsaw-based studio that's produced many commercials for the continent and a number of award-winning shorts, including *The Cathedral* and *Fallen Art*. *Ark* is a short story about a future plague that's forced a group of survivors to board a ship and seek out a new home on some safe and sterile faraway island. Taking in a number of exquisite vistas, both interiors and exteriors, we follow one man who's keeping a sharp eye on his own health as he holes up in his room on board the ark, and who finds to his horror that he's unwittingly carrying the dread disease. He leaves his quarters and walks through the cavernous interior of the ark, past other voyagers and miles of strung laundry in the massive main room of the ship, up a ladder to the roof — where sights both beautiful and terrible confront him.

**Taylor Jessen:** How long did the production take from start to finish?



The design of the interiors in *Ark* has a look much akin to catacombs. The directors wanted the style of *Ark* to stray completely from a conventional picture associated with computer-animated films. All *Ark* images © 2007 Grzegorz Jonkajtys, Marcin Kobylecki.

**Marcin Kobylecki:** We spent about two years from first sketches to final compositing.

**TJ:** Talk about your scholastic background and your professional background. What led you to animation?

**MK:** Greg Jonkajtys has the "artistic" background — he graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Also, he is working at CafeFX as lead animator [*Pan's Labyrinth*] so he is in touch with major Hollywood productions. I'm a master of science in computer-aided design, with a major in automatics and robotics. So, as you see, it is a long way from film.

I was interested in computer graphics during college and I had a good knowledge of it before I start working at Platige Image. I may say that I was lucky that my first project was *The Cathedral*, and this film let me gain huge experience in production of animated movies, especially after the Oscar nomination. So far I've produced a couple of shorts and if it won't spoil anything, now I'm gaining knowledge and preparing myself for our first feature.

**TJ:** Production was split between teams in Poland and in the U.S. I imagine having just that tiny window of common daytime hours in which to communicate must have been a

challenge.

**MK:** If we take things like time zones into account, synchronizing the whole production required a lot of patience from us, especially if we mean communication between particular people from the team.

**TJ:** The design of the interiors has a look much akin to catacombs. Was it your intention to be super-realistic?

**MK:** We wanted the style of *Ark* to stray completely from a conventional picture associated with computer-animated films, and the visual side to be characteristically exaggerated. Artificiality, precisely assorted objects, details of set design and character animation highlighted certain features of the film and focused the viewer's attention on the story.

**TJ:** In terms of your tool set, you're using the usual suspects in the software world, SOFTIMAGE|XSI, 3ds Max, LightWave, modo and After Effects — but for the sets you went another direction, which was to hand-build them and do motion-control moves on them while shooting on a Nikon D70 digital still camera. It's kind of high-tech and garage at the same time. Did you do it for aesthetic reasons or financial reasons, or was it a bit of both?

[See Computer Animation winners Page 7]



**Ark** (left) is kind of high-tech and garage at the same time. The usual suspects of the software world are combined with hand-built sets and motion-control moves.

#### [Computer Animation Winners from Page 6]

**MK:** Creating a set design rich in detail would have been very complicated, tedious and in some cases probably even impossible. Besides, lighting and rendering of such detailed scenes would have required huge processing power. Using this technique allowed us to avoid the problem. On the other hand, manual work on making such models was a kind of refuge after a dozen hours spent in front of the computer every day.

**TJ:** What's your current project?

**MK:** Now Greg and I are going to make another short, different from *Ark*. We already have an idea and are in preproduction. Right after that we are planning to do the feature. We have finished scripts and now we are looking for budget for it. It will be a funny story—funny and macabre at the same time: similar to Tim Burton's movies.

*Dreammaker* tells the story of a lonely old man in a house in the forest who manufactures glowing gaseous dreams, distributed in little glass ampoules and inhaled by their users. Not a charitable man, his visions both beatific and baleful are sold to whoever has the cash. The inventor is haunted by the memory of a love he's lost, and frustrated by his inability to manufacture the perfect dream to bring her image back; and into his misery comes a wordless young woman who sweeps up the workshop and eventually melts his heart. Director Plichta had this

to say about the production process:

**TJ:** What was the story kernel for the short?

**Leszek Plichta:** I think I wanted to create an animated movie, which is not just built on slapstick, but tries to deal with more complex characters. I do not even see it as an animated movie but as a movie with real persons. The basic idea came from the title itself, *Dreammaker*. So the most obvious choice was to tell it as a kind of fairytale. I liked the vision of someone who can create dreams, but it couldn't be someone who just makes people around him happy. I wanted to tell the story from a different perspective, a story of someone who is tired of that. For him making dreams became a science—he is tired of all the people who come to him for dreams because he learned how to manipulate them. The dreams lost their

magic for him. Almost. Except for the one dream he is trying to create for himself. But that is the schizophrenic part in him. As he doesn't believe in dreams anymore, he is failing over and over again, compensating it by more and more formulas in which he hopes to find his salvation. He is trapped in a vicious circle, a self-built labyrinth that keeps him from a life worth living. Clinging to a past he can't let go.

At least for me, on a different level the

most obvious metaphor for the dreams are movies. For instance, Hollywood is being called The Dream Factory. So the making of this movie definitely inspired the making of this movie. Does this sound kind of weird?

**TJ:** Besides directing, what else did you do for the short — art direction, character designs, animating?

**LP:** Maybe it's easier if I tell you what I haven't done... The project was mostly done solo, although I had help in writing the story. And, as I'm no musician, the music and sound design were also done by people, who, unlike me, knew what they were doing. So, besides me, there were Dominik Steffan, who did the screenplay, David Christiansen, who composed and



For *Dreammaker* (above), which took the Jury Honors prize, filmmaker Leszek Plichta wanted to create an animated movie not just built on slapstick, but a story that would deal with more complex characters. All *Dreammaker* images © Leszek Plichta.

orchestrated the music, and Michael J. Diehl, who was responsible for all the sound design, and Marcus Neuberger, who was the foley artist.

**TJ:** Talk about some artists that have influenced your design style.

**LP:** That's a tough one. Where do I start? Would you prefer hearing about my first Marvel comics or about my *Garfield* draw-

[See Computer Animation Winners, Page 8]

[Computer Animation Winners from Page 7]



**It's easier to name the jobs Plichta didn't perform on *Dreammaker*. He didn't write the screenplay, compose or orchestrate the music, create the sound design or do the foley.**

ings in the first grade? There are so many people that influenced my work. Most of them I probably don't know by name. Sometimes it's advertising, a photograph or just a picture I stumble across in a magazine or the Internet. If you'd like to hear a name that was a big influence and that got me from doodling to a more conscious drawing style, that would be Todd McFarlane [former Marvel artist and the creator of the *Spawn* comics series]. He was a major idol in my teen years. Later more and more artists were added, like Greg Capullo, Ashley Wood, etc. I also had a period where lots of graffiti artists were a big influence, and of course there's always a touch of Manga and Anime. From the old masters I like the art of William Bouguereau or Rembrandt. There are simply too many possibilities to be influenced by. Sometimes it's architecture, sometimes it's just a shape or the color palette from an artist, from which I might dislike everything else. Nowadays I have to take care not to be overwhelmed by all the immense pool of artists on the Internet forums. They always inspire me to try new styles and to progress.

**TJ:** Talk about your scholastic background and your professional background. What led you to animation? What's your history with the Filmakademie?

**LP:** Like most kids growing up in the '80s, I was strongly influenced by computer

games, from Atari to C64 to the Amiga. On the Amiga I started doing my first digital graphics and dreamed to make my own computer game someday. So one day I started to create this game with some friends. One did the programming, one did the music and I did the graphics part. We even had a beta level done, but as with most childhood dreams it ended with that. But that was the beginning of my excitement for animation.

After that, though, I paused animation and did my A-levels with emphasis on fine arts, followed by a multimedia study at the University of Applied Sciences where I first got in contact with 3ds Max and fell in love with 3D. Noticing that my passion for programming in Java and doing websites was less than acute, and coincidentally discovering an article about the Filmakademie in a magazine, I decided to give it a try. The whole time I've been first working as a graphic designer and later as a CG artist in any departments, mostly for national and international commercials.

**TJ:** How long did the production take from start to finish?

**LP:** The project was done over a period of four years. I try not to think about that too often.

**TJ:** What was the biggest technical challenge?

**LP:** I don't exactly have a favorite one, but the ones that were quite often responsible for mental breakdowns were cloth simulation and fluid dynamics for the smoke effects. They never did what I wanted them to and took forever to calculate.

**TJ:** Was this a major learning experience for the crew?

**LP:** Most definitely! As I was the only animator and it was my first long animation, I learned along the way. Also every other aspect from rigging to compositing was a challenge in itself and assembled. I had to learn how to organize myself and to combine all the little pieces together — solve the problems that occurred, find workarounds or make and accept a compromise when everything else would slow down the progress too much (sounds easier than it is). So, yes. I learned quite a lot.

**TJ:** What's your current project?

**LP:** Well, after doing this project for so long with almost no spare time or vacations, my next project is spending three months in southeast Asia with a friend of mine, drinking cocktails on the beach, running through the jungle, visiting old temples and getting bitten by mosquitoes.

*En Tus Brazos* was directed, as per Sinfocom's usual *modus operandi*, by a team of three animators. The sepia-toned short film concerns a particularly bittersweet afternoon in the lives of a pair of dancers who once took the world of tango by storm, but whose careers came to a sudden end after the male lead suffered an accident that left him a paraplegic. Alone together in their apartment, studed with awards and photographs and other ephemera from their old life, the woman tries to lift her partner's spirits by literally lifting him from his chair and tak-

[See Computer Animation Winners, Page 9]

[Computer Animation Wiinners from Page 8]



SIGGRAPH's Award of Excellence goes to *En Tus Brazos* from co-directors Francois-Xavier Goby, Edouard Jouret and Matthieu Landour. All *En Tus Brazos* images © Francois-Xavier Goby, Edouard Jouret and Matthieu Landour.

ing the lead in a dance, lifting his legs with hers and bringing back a flood of shared memories of what they once saw and how they once moved. Goby answered questions on behalf of the short's trio:

**TJ:** What burning idea did you have in you that you had to get out with this short?

**Francois-Xavier Goby:** I love tango and I wanted to do a short that was focusing on its characters and their strong relationship. I had an image in mind, the image of a woman holding her handicapped husband in her arms while moving his feet to "make" him dance. I thought that could be the starting point of a story, since without saying anything it tells a lot about their relationship, their past and their future.

**TJ:** How did the three of you split duties?

**FXG:** As this is a graduate film, we wanted to experiment with a bit of everything, so we did. The three of us modeled, animated, shaded, lit and composed. Of course, to improve the production each of us got more specialized in a field, but the aim was that the film was the result of the effort of the three of us.

**TJ:** What found materials did you surround yourself with for inspiration?

**FXG:** In order to find the basis of the story, I listened to classical tangos, I watched old movies and I spent a lot of time lying on my bed thinking. Just before starting the production, we worked to find some strong reference points so we would have the same vision of the film. Matthieu and I have a passion for cinema in general. We wanted the short to be classic in its form, inspired by classic American movies of the '40s and '50s. We used references from the art nouveau and art deco periods for the atmosphere and the furniture. We used a lot of tango videos that I made at the world championship of tango in Buenos Aires. We danced tango a little bit to understand the movements and see what body parts were involved in the dance.

**TJ:** What drew you to Supinfocom?

**FXG:** I wanted to attend a live-action cinema school in France but I failed the entrance... My good friend Clément Bolla (who did an amazing animated short called *Zoudov* that you can see at [www.zoudov.com](http://www.zoudov.com)) told me about Supinfocom and I thought there were many links there with the live-action cinema... And I am more than happy to be able to do animated movies. This is freedom!

**TJ:** The three-person team seems to be Supinfocom's trademark — were you satisfied with that arrangement?

**FXG:** No, I hate Matthieu and Edouard! No, of course I am satisfied. We didn't know each other before starting this project and this is the story of the short that



The three directors wanted to experiment with a bit of everything on the film, so they modeled, animated, shaded, lit and composed. Each of them did become more specialized in a field, but the result is the effort of the entire directing team.

made the link between us. And it worked out very surprisingly well. We never fought and were very complementary. It was a pleasure and I'd love doing new projects with them.

**TJ:** Did all of you grow up with this music? Or did you know dancers like these?

**FXG:** No. I didn't listen to this music before I was 16... At that age a friend of my older sister taught me a few steps of tango, and I immediately loved this music. Now I listen to many genres but this one is

[See Computer Animation Winners, Page 10]

**[Computer Animation Wiinners from Page 9]**  
still one of my favorites.

**TJ:** What was the biggest technical challenge?

**FXG:** I don't think we had very big technical challenge. The tough work was to be able to animate a couple during a two-minute dance without having animated ever before... So it was a big part in our planning of production, and it went faster than we thought. Otherwise the really big technical challenge was to do a short animated film for the first time!

**TJ:** Talk about your scholastic background and your professional background.

**FXG:** I started at Supinfocom in Arles, I stopped for one year to go traveling and then I finished Supinfocom in Valenciennes last year. I am currently working as a freelance CG artist and a director. I directed various projects mixing techniques from video to 3D to stop motion.

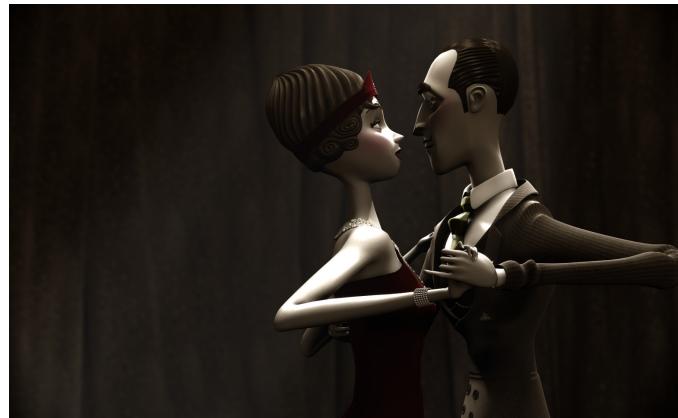
**TJ:** What's next?

**FXG:** A short film project with Matthieu in CG animation, some other projects that I also want to get produced and many little works for broadcast animation, commercial or music video.

---

TAYLOR JESSEN is a writer living in Burbank. If you need some paper clips, he's got an extra box.

---



To prepare for the film, Goby listened to classical tangos and old movies. The directors wanted the short to be classic in its form, inspired by classic American movies of the '40s and '50s.

## VOICE PRODUCTION SPECIALISTS

ENGLISH - FRENCH - SPANISH



# Agile Sound

WWW.AGILESOUND.COM

# SIGGRAPH's Guerilla Studio Provides Interactive Collaborations

Creation abounds during the SIGGRAPH Guerilla Studio, an interactive creation studio that provides attendees with the opportunity to create art in every subdiscipline imaginable.

Attendees will have the chance to utilize powerful workstations, versatile software, and the expertise of several artists, scientists and engineers to create imaginative concepts in 2D, 3D, 4D, and n-dimensional media. This year's Guerilla Studio program provides attendees with creative freedom throughout several technologies and creative areas.

"We are very excited about some of the new additions to this year's Guerilla Studio," stated Rebecca Strzelec, SIGGRAPH 2007 Guerilla Studio chair from Pennsylvania State University - Altoona. "The Guerilla Studio is one of the few venues that allows for attendee interaction. Add to that collaboration with some of the industry's finest and you have a unique atmosphere for creative production that you wouldn't find anywhere else."

Highlights from this year's Guerilla Studio include:

## Artists In Residence Program

Area Chief: Phil Carrizzi

This year, the Guerilla Studio is hosting six emerging and established resident artists who come from 2D, 3D, digital, non-digital, production, one-of-a-kind, large and small scale-traditions. These artists will have their own group workspace, integrated into the overall studio design, to help facilitate the best possible mix of their personal visions and skills, group and collaborative energies, and the array of technical resources represented in the Guerilla Studio. They will blend their dynamic individual studio practices, in media not always well represented at SIGGRAPH, with the emerging technologies and public nature of the Guerilla Studio to help their work evolve and provide inspiration to attendees. The 2007 Artists in Residence are: Harriete Estel Berman, Matthew Hamon, Philip Mallory Jones, Mike and Maaike and Michael Wright.

## Animation Area

Area Chief: Gene Cooper

Explore both the very high tech and the low tech of animation techniques, processes, and technologies. Only 5–10 minutes to spare? Sit down and have some fun at our stop-motion animation stations as you build a quick animation to take home. A little more time to spare? Meet one of our creative specialists, who will be ready to open up the engine compartments of their own work, get into the nuts and bolts of its design, and then hand over the keys to see what you can do. Just interested in watching? Attend one of our presentations showcasing a number of projects and techniques. Browsing for new tools? Sit down at one of our open stations where you'll be able to explore some of the latest and best of tools available. Anyway you cut it, there's something for everyone. Most of all, have fun creating, exploring, and taking advantage of the amazing tools and projects that are available in the Guerilla Studio.

informal basis. This year, we've added a few projects that allow attendees and artists to contribute to a community image montage and other projects throughout the week.

## Guerilla Editions: AKA the 2D Area

Area Chief: Karl Lang

This is the heart of the Guerilla Studio. Images produced by artists in the Guerilla Studio are received via our gigabit network. After receipt, the images are processed and rendered as fine-art pigment prints. We use the latest technology, fine-art papers and archival pigment inks that resist fading for hundreds of years. Master printmakers and even a color scientist manage all aspects of the color workflow and printing. Technologies from Epson, X-Rite, Colorbyte, and other companies are used to produce museum-quality prints. If you have questions about color management, calibration, file prep, or image permanence, ask the staff at Guerilla Editions.

## Collaboration Area

Area Chief: Lyn Bishop

Often the creative process is singular and individual, but when the work becomes collaborative, the resulting imagery becomes more than the sum of its parts. In the Collaboration Space, attendees share collaboration, cultural exchange, and cooperative art-making. Artists and attendees collaborate, in real time, on networked projects with students from Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, India. Live collaborative sessions with Srishti take place each morning. We invite you to drop in anytime to get involved with the international collaboration or local collaborations with other conference attendees and artists.

## 3D Area

Area Chief: Makai Smith

In the 3D area, attendees are invited to work with state-of-the-art 3D data-capture systems, modeling packages, and rapid-prototyping equipment. In this creative environment, you can generate 3D digital objects either by modeling in the latest version of various full-featured software packages or by using 3D data-capture devices to scan actual objects (bring an object, or yourself, or sculpt an object out of clay; we'll even provide the clay). Then your computer models can be "manufactured" in three dimensions (translated into physical reality) with a bank of rapid-prototyping machines, printed two dimensionally using various large- and small-format printing processes, or animated.

## Drawing Circle

Area Chief: Dave Nutty

As in the past, the drawing circle will be available to attendees to drop in and sketch away their thoughts and/or stress or doodle up the next masterpiece on an

## Lenticular Printing

Area Chief: Raleigh Souther

Create spectacular 3D lenticular effects with lenticular training from Chris Wil-

*[See SIGGRAPH's Guerilla Studio, Page 12]*

**[SIGGRAPH's Guerilla Studio from Page 11]**

liams (Knowledge Gaming) and Raleigh Souther (Get Flipped! Inc.). They show how to create 3D depth in any 2D images, explore the process of mastering any file for a full 3D or animated lenticular effect, and help attendees produce a finished lenticular 3D image. Attendees can also use Get Flipped! Pro Studio software to experience a 3D environment and an actual 3D lenticular image capture. Daily signups (15 minutes or two hours): 1:00 – 6:00 pm Sunday, 9:00 am - noon and 1:00 – 6:00 pm Monday through Wednesday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Thursday.

**Motion Capture, Courtesy of PhaseSpace**

Area Chief: Tracy McSheery

PhaseSpace invites you to try out the PhaseSpace IMPULSE motion-capture system in the SIGGRAPH 2007 Guerrilla Studio. Sign up now to secure your 15 minutes of fame! We will light you up with our active LED system, and then give you the floor to do with as you will. After you are done, you will receive the motion capture data that was recorded during your performance.

**Show and Tell**

Area Chief: Bob Gould

Need information? Can't find what you need? Want to see what has been going on in the Guerrilla Studio? Too overwhelmed to know where to begin? Show and Tell encompasses all of this and so much more!

**Sound Area**

Area Chief: Terry Nauheim

An interactive sound installation that uses the model of sound greeting cards as a vehicle for sound transactions. Attendees take part in a collective soundscape through playing sound greeting cards as musical instruments. Inspired by music boxes, we chose the sound greeting card because it is a contemporary example of mechanical playback. The music box also offers a limited version of a tune through its limited tonal range and playback length. We are interested in these limitations and find commonalities be-

tween them and digital sound formats. For example, low sample rates and compression formats are designed for portability and accessibility while giving up the integrity and quality of their original sounds. On the other hand, this economizing of sound has yielded a new audio palette that can be heard throughout popular culture, including computer-game soundtracks, ring tones, talking toys and pop music. Our sounds are fragments of field recordings brought into the Guerrilla Studio. Through attendee selections and playback, the origin of these sounds will be recombined to recontextualize them into the SIGGRAPH 2007 context.

**TeraDRE**

Area Chief: Laura Arns

The TeraDRE at Purdue University is a distributed-rendering environment with more than 4,000 render nodes. Distributed rendering greatly reduces the time needed to produce a large animation and frees up lab machines for other uses. Attendees are encouraged to both bring material from home to be rendered and create new material in the

Studio for rendering via TeraDRE. Submit your rendering jobs to the TeraDRE and then "pick up" your completed renders at a later time via the web. Jobs can be submitted for a variety of environments, such as Maya, Blender and POVRay.

Complete details available in July.

**Video Area: Software Playing Nice**

Area Chief: Terry Vandenakker

The G-Vid Team uses mainly filtered video footage with an emphasis on compositing different footage from different software applications. Final editing is done in Final Cut Pro. The team and SIGGRAPH 2007 attendees shoot the background elements and live action in DV in and around the conference. Then we create characters in Flash and LightWave 3D, but we do a simple cell-shade rendering to save texturing and lighting time. We create narration to carry the story, so there will be no need for more time-consuming lip sync. Keeping the background and foreground elements separate, we then composite in After Effects to add depth and to intensify colors as the characters' emotions change.

**Go Behind the Scenes of Spider-Man 3**

Sony Pictures Imageworks artists on *Spider-Man 3* will reveal the creative challenges and technical achievements in creating the triple threat of the movie's dangerous villains (Sandman, Venom and New Goblin) at SIGGRAPH 2007, the 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on Computer Graphics and

Interactive Techniques held Aug. 5–9 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California.



For the first time in its history, Sony Pictures Imageworks produced fully [See *Spider-Man 3*, Page 13]

# Frantic Films Set to Debut New Software

The software division of award-winning visual effects studio Frantic Films will be demonstrating an array of new software products at SIGGRAPH 2007. Along with a new version of Deadline, the company's popular render farm solution, Frantic Films will unveil several new developments at booth #1720 throughout the conference, Aug. 7–9, at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California.

These new solutions designed for visual effects and animation Professionals include:

- Flood and Flood: Surf: Flood is a simulation software suite that creates realistic water, foam, oil, rubber and lava. Flood: Surf lets users create photoreal ocean surfaces
- Krakatoa: High-volume point-based particle renderer, manipulation and management toolkit available as a plug-in for Autodesk 3ds Max
- Deadline: Render farm management system that provides a hassle-free method to both administer and expedite projects on render farms of all sizes
- Amaretto: 3ds Max interface for NVIDIA's Gelato renderer that gives VFX professionals complete interoperability between the two programs

"All of Frantic Films software tools have been developed out of necessity — to fill the need of complex production challenges we encountered on major VFX films like *Superman Returns*, as well as current productions for Walden Media," said Chris Bond, president & creative director, Frantic Films. "These tools have been put to the ultimate test-required to perform and deliver under tight timelines, not only here at Frantic, but also at several prominent effects, animation and gaming facilities around the world."



"The development team at Frantic Films is exemplary, they also provide incredibly fast and efficient support. We have been using Deadline to run a render farm of over 160 computers, and we are able to output thousands of images per month with no worries. I can rest assured that everything renders smoothly with Deadline," said Sylvain Berger, technical director of Alpha Vision, a two-year customer of Frantic Films Deadline software.

*Headquartered in Winnipeg, Canada, with offices in Vancouver and Los Angeles, Frantic Films ([www.franticfilms.com](http://www.franticfilms.com)) has been*

*operating divisions that provide visual effects for film and television, live-action production and vfx software development since 1997. Frantic Films' award-winning visual effects teams have worked on films, including *Fantastic Four: The Rise of the Silver Surfer*, *Grindhouse*, *Superman Returns*, *X-Men 3*, *Poseidon* and many others. The company's software tools were developed to solve complex production challenges on in-house feature effects projects, and are also in use at many leading 3D animation and effects facilities worldwide. Frantic Films' live-action division creates and produces Gemini Award-winning programs for Canadian and international television networks.*

## *[Spider-Man 3, from Page 12]*

articulated, performing CG characters entirely composed of dynamically generated particles and fluids. These digital characters, which embodied key-framed performance animation, interacted with each other and with live-action characters in both real and synthetic environments. Academy Award-winning senior visual effects supervisor Scott Stokdyk, digital effects supervisors Ken Hahn and Peter Nofz and animation director Spencer Cook explore their experience in bringing these legendary characters and this series to life at SIGGRAPH 2007.

"This is just one of many rare opportu-

nities to experience the behind-the-scenes perspective from Hollywood's industry experts," stated Special Sessions co-chair Jerome Solomon. "In fact, we have an amazing line up of talent presenting work in *Shrek*, *Spider-Man 3* and the Oscar winner, *Happy Feet*. Nowhere else but at SIGGRAPH can you find such opportunities to obtain real experience and innovative insights."

# SIGGRAPH Art Gallery Expands Awareness of Humanity and Nature

Artwork that illuminates the role the digital media plays in shaping, extending and reflecting world views and cosmologies will be showcased throughout the SIGGRAPH 2007 Art Gallery: Global Eyes.

Global Eyes will explore ecological, social and political issues in imaginative and innovative ways through a variety of submitted and curated works. This year there were more than 660 submissions from 30 countries that were evaluated by a prestigious international jury. The main categories presented during Global Eyes include animation, artist books, panel discussions, papers, digital performances, art installations, as well as monitor and wall-based works. These works aim to foster respect, tolerance and empathy among people and nations.

"The SIGGRAPH Art Gallery is known for consistently presenting the work of the world's most talented digital artists," stated Vibeke Sorensen SIGGRAPH 2007 Art Gallery chair from the University at Buffalo. "Global Eyes is an exciting forum for showcasing alternative ways to think about nature and art, and how the two interact."

Global Eyes will also offer SIGGRAPH 2007 attendees the opportunity to visit the California Institute for Telecommunications Information Technology (Cal-IT2) and the Center for Research in Computing and the Arts (CRCA) at the University of California - San Diego. Cal-IT2 and CRCA are providing their innovative, state-of-the-art facility to house the Art Gallery performances and site-specific installations during a special weekend event from Aug. 4-6 at SIGGRAPH 2007. Buses will be available between the San Diego Convention Center and CAL-IT2.

This year's program will also be collaborating with ISAST Leonardo, an organization that serves the international arts community by promoting and documenting work at the intersection of the arts, sciences and technology in an effort to build bridges between people working creatively all around the world.

Highlights From the SIGGRAPH 2007 Art Gallery: Global Eyes include:

## Animation

### *Self-Transparency*

Arina Melkozernova, Arizona, U.S.

Self-Transparency is an animated work dedicated to painter Remedios Varo. The artist has incorporated aspects of the surrealist's iconography that relate to her own experience. This piece has been chosen by industry leaders as a premier example of digital artwork from one of the country's best and brightest digital media artists.



## Selected Works From the 10th Japan Media Arts Festival

Various Artists, Tokyo, Japan

Japan Media Arts Festival is a contest that awards creative media art works utilizing the latest expression technology. The festival also supports creative activity and through the presentation of a broad base of various works. This festival promotes the development of media arts in Japan by providing opportunities of appreciation such as exhibitions and sanctioned events.

## Digital Performance

Performing Arts for the Future Mobile Generation

Hiroshi Matoba, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture

These two performance works predict new styles of play that children will enjoy with future mobile phones. One is made from six units of wireless displays based on LCD technology. The other is based on three units of wireless LED projectors.

## Monitor-based Work

*World*

Santiago Echeverry, The University of Tampa

*World* is an interactive display of video

and audio memories captured with the artist's cell phone camera in very low resolution. These personal souvenirs are fragmented into small portions of a larger chaotic and randomized composition. The clips are loaded dynamically allowing the artist to add more elements, and increase the group of clips as time goes by.

## Wall-based Work

World Identity Cards

Joe Nalven, Digital Art Guild

Migration has always been a part of the human condition. With the advent of the written language, travelers are identified via identity cards or passports. The next step to evolving a transnational identity, while acknowledging the need for public recognition of the individual as opposed to anonymity, may be a world identity card. These exemplars are drawn from ethnographic research, photographic explorations and mixed media experimentation, and then recomposed as a digital composition.

# Side Effects Launches Houdini 9 Public Beta

Side Effects Software has marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company with a public beta launch of its flagship product, Houdini. The new Houdini 9 offers a dramatically redesigned User Interface (UI), which, combined with the recently announced lower price point, puts the legendary creative power of Houdini within reach of everyone in the CG industry.

Houdini is available for as low as \$1,999 for Houdini Escape which brings Houdini's powerful node-based workflow to modelers, lighters, animators and character riggers, and \$7,999 for Houdini Master, which brings Houdini's renowned particle and dynamic tools to visual effects artists and technical directors.

These prices put Houdini 9 within reach of boutique studios and artists working in feature film, broadcast or videogames. In addition, the UI for Houdini 9 is now easier to learn and designed to match the UI standards of the CG industry. Now, for the first time ever, self-taught, Houdini newbies will be able to work with the software right out of the box and be productive much faster than ever before.

"We are excited to be celebrating such an important milestone in our company's history," said Kim Davidson, president/founder of Side Effects Software. "It's part of our commitment to make Houdini more accessible to CG professionals everywhere who are looking for tools that can help them push the art of the possible in an ever more demanding marketplace."

The Houdini 9 feature set includes a powerful new fluid dynamic solver that lets you simulate liquids, smoke and fire. As part of Houdini's fully integrated dynamics architecture, the new solver lets you run simulations that combine fluids, rigid bodies and particles. This powerful dynamics environment will help you create a wide variety of boundary breaking visual effects.

Houdini's Mantra renderer has also become more powerful with the addition of multi-segment motion blur, physically-based rendering, volumetric rendering, fur procedurals and significant speed improvements. Houdini 9 includes a new

Material palette and a robust set of lighting and camera tools. Now Mantra's production-proven rendering will be accessible to a wider audience of users.

Houdini 9 also includes an object-oriented Python API, which provides low-level access to Houdini and makes it easy to integrate Houdini into your existing pipeline. Houdini's new python-based back end also lets you add support for new renderers by simply writing a script.

"CG professionals operate in a high-pressure, high-demand environment that requires them to get the job done while meeting and exceeding client expectations," said Davidson. "Houdini 9 draws on our well known reputation as a powerful 3D animation tool that can help artists develop more responsive and flexible VFX and animation while reducing production timelines."

The Houdini 9 public beta is available for download now at the Side Effects website along with the Houdini 9 blog

which will be hosting a series of new video tutorials.

If you are attending SIGGRAPH 2007 in San Diego, you will also be able to participate in one of our free hands-on Houdini 9 training sessions. These courses will be cover 16 different topics and will run about one to two hours long. Registration for these classes is now available at the website.

*Established in 1987, Side Effects Software ([www.sidefx.com](http://www.sidefx.com)) is a world leader in the development of advanced 3D animation and special effects software for use in film. Side Effects Software leads the field of procedural animation with its unique, award-winning, Houdini technology. Houdini is used by numerous digital content creation leaders, including: C.O.R.E., Digital Domain, Disney Feature Animation, DNA Prods., Framestore-CFC, The Orphanage, Rhythm & Hues and Sony Pictures Imageworks, among others.*

## SIGGRAPH 2007 Announces Co-Located Technology Events



SIGGRAPH 2007 will partner with five technology events that will co-locate in San Diego before or during the 34th International Conference & Exhibition on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques being held Aug. 5–9 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California.

Returning to SIGGRAPH in 2007 will be The Graphics Hardware Workshop, the Symposium on Computer Animation (SCA) and Sandbox: A Videogame Symposium. For the first time, SIGGRAPH also welcomes the International Symposium on Non-Photorealistic Animation and Rendering (NPAR) and the Emerging Dis-

play Technologies Workshop. These five events will take place on different dates throughout the duration of SIGGRAPH 2007 inside or close to the San Diego Convention Center.

"This partnership only enhances the overall SIGGRAPH experience in San Diego," stated Joe Marks, SIGGRAPH 2007 Conference chair from Walt Disney Animation Studios. "Attendees will have a chance to delve deeper on select topics through co-located events, while also getting broad exposure to the latest developments in computer graphics and interactive techniques at the main conference."

*For more information on SIGGRAPH 2007 and these unique opportunities, visit <http://www.siggraph.org/s2007/attendees/colocated/>.*

# Global Eyes Look Near and Far at SIGGRAPH Art Gallery

By J. Paul Peszko



**The focus of the Art Gallery for SIGGRAPH 2007 is on international artists. *Ireve* by 14-year-old Japanese artist, Shunsaku Hayashi, combines evocative painting with animation. Unless noted, all images courtesy of SIGGRAPH.**

When SIGGRAPH 2007 convenes in San Diego, the venue won't be the only difference in its annual Art Gallery. This year's Art Gallery, titled Global Eyes, will run concurrently with the main conference and exhibition from Aug. 5–9 at the San Diego Convention Center. However, the digital art performances and site-specific installations will run from Aug. 4–6 at the state-of-the-art facilities of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Cal-IT2), and the Center for Research in Computing and the Arts (CRCA) at the University of California, San Diego. The main differences in this year's Art Gallery, not surprisingly, are in its selections and scope.

As one might expect from this year's title, Global Eyes, the focus is an international one. While there has been considerable international participation in past Art Galleries, the chairperson for Global Eyes, Vebeka Sorensen, chairperson for Media Study at the State University of New York at Buffalo, believes that it is greater this year. An artist in her own right and professor working in digital multimedia and animation, interactive architectural installation and network visual-music performance, Sorensen says, "This year we have a theme that's different from

most previous years. Our theme is global, so we're trying to be as inclusive of people from other countries and cultures who are working with technologies as possible to give a different kind of view of what is going on around the world. Because now the technology is reaching globally, the question is how and how far are people who were previously isolated being transformed by it. And we're focused on how people see each other and the world around them."

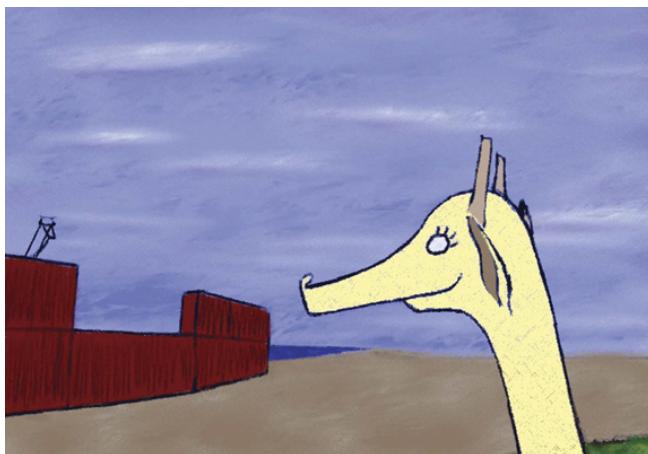
She suggests that the explosion of digital technologies across the globe and the way people are working with them is not only synthesizing different cultures in new ways, but also various fields of study. "Because it very much brings in the whole way people create in the cross media," Sorensen affirms. "That would mean greater physical-digital interaction." She asserts quite correctly that digital technologies have even engendered new ways of looking at and turning to older media. "We have an artist book category, for example," Sorensen points out. "That's because people are making books collaboratively, globally with digital cameras, then uploading (the photos) on the Internet then working collaboratively on the images and then turning them out and distributing them."

This year there were more than 660 submissions from 30 countries that were evaluated by a prestigious international jury. The main categories presented during Global Eyes include animation, artist books, panel discussions, papers, digital performances, art installations, as well as monitor and wall-based works. Sorenson highlighted a few of the works that will surely draw attention at this year's Art Gallery.

*Ireve* is an unusual work by a talented young Japanese artist, Shunsaku Hayashi, from Osaka. Only 14 years old, Shunsaku combines his evocative painting with animation to create a very compelling abstract work. "*Ireve* means artificial tooth in Japanese," Shunsaku explains. "I saw my father's artificial tooth left on the table. Got inspiration from it. This artificial tooth is bulimia, and loves the human neck." And just how experienced is this young artist? "This work is the fifth work. I am making new freeze-frame animation now. I'll attend SIGGRAPH 2007 from Aug. 5–7. I'll bring and show my new work by DVD at the time." You can preview some of Shunsaku's paintings on his website at [www1.odn.ne.jp/~haya4hello/](http://www1.odn.ne.jp/~haya4hello/).

Another wonderful animated work comes from Argentina. Although *La grua y la jirafa* (*The Crane and the Giraffe*) is Vladimir Bellini's first animation, it's all about the gentle, delicate movement that Bellini is able to give the piece using computer animation. It came about as the result of his last assignment at the University. "I had to create a piece of work of about two minutes," Bellini explains. "I am interested in a story which I can present without dialog. And when I create an animation, I target children mostly. This is, in one sense, a challenge for me. Children are very honest and they would say the truth if they clearly don't like it, period. So I am the most tense when my work is shown to children."

[See SIGGRAPH Art Gallery, Page 17]



*La grua y la jirafa* (*The Crane and the Giraffe*) is Argentinian Vladimir Bellini's first animation. He had in mind the interchange of different cultures as his theme.

**[SIGGRAPH Art Gallery, from Page 16]**

"The first time my animation was shown was at the independent film festival held in Buenos Aires and, to be honest with you, I was very nervous, since a lot of children were there to watch it. In terms of result, it was very well accepted, which relieved me. Last year, when it was screened in Rome, children were there also to watch it. I was delighted that overseas children also at once accepted this strange little love story."

Just like the main theme of *Global Eyes*, Bellini had in mind the interchange of different cultures as his theme. "How do different cultures or different people interact?" is the main theme and this is a very important thing in contemporary society—at least in Argentinean society—in my point of view. The reason I use a crane and a giraffe is because there is a port on my way to the university and I saw cranes every day. A crane and a giraffe look alike, don't they? I thought about crane, giraffe, crane, giraffe, every day and I came to think it would be good to make a story in which these two creatures appear. I imagined if a crane and a giraffe met, how would they think of each other?"

Bellini worked hard to maintain the features of hand drawing while animating the piece. "Although this is my first animated short film, when I got the idea, I structured a story while drawing drafts and created a storyboard on small sheets of paper. After that, I drew illustrations on the PC using tablets. *The Crane and the Giraffe* was made with a really cheap genius tablet (\$50 more or less) but now with the

world prizes, I can afford a beautiful Wacom Intuos3 that I really love."



Russian native Arina Melkozernova's *Self-Transparency* has been chosen by industry leaders as a premier example of digital artwork from one of the country's best and brightest digital media artists.

Bellini prefers hand drawing to computer animation. "It is nice to draw a picture on paper, as it is traditional, but in my opinion, too much paper will be needed, which is a waste if you think from the point of view of resources. The production of *La grua y la jirafa* took about four months. It doesn't mean I worked on only that every day, but it was time-consuming to draw sketches one by one—and also it was my first time. When you move a picture, I love that the line of the character wobbles. That's why I draw pictures by hand. Hand drawing gives a lively impression and warm presentation... full of life characters. I personally am not fond of animation using the full range of CG technology, vector graphics, keyframe-made animation as it gives me a very cold feel-

ing. I'm a big *Dr. Katz* fan (Comedy Central's Emmy-winning cartoon)!"

Arina Melkozernova's *Self-Transparency* is an animated work dedicated to painter Remedios Varo. The artist has incorporated aspects of the surrealist's iconography that relate to her own experience and explores the inner world of the person. "It is as though you are just waking up to understanding your body in space and having feelings about it," Sorenson spoke of Melkozernova's work, which she admires a great deal. "It's very, very beautiful." This piece has been chosen by industry leaders as a premier example of digital artwork from one of the country's best and brightest digital media artists.

Dennis Miller was the artistic director of an event called the [Visual Music Marathon](#), which was a 12-hour festival of visual music held in Boston on April 28 of this year as part of the 2007 Boston Cyberarts Festival ([www.bostoncyberarts.org](http://www.bostoncyberarts.org)). "We ran a call for work and got over 300 entries from 34 countries. Sixty of these works were chosen by our judges and another 60 works were selected

by our two principal guest curators, Bruce Wands of the School of Visual Arts and New York Digital Salon and Larry Cuba of the Iota Center, to which were added works from invited artists, an excellent section of historic films (Richter, Bute, Fischinger, McLaren, Hirsh, Breer, Whitney and Lye), and one section of live video art performances. In case you are wondering, visual music is defined broadly as film, video or animation in which the visual elements are informed by musical processes. "That means a lot of different things to a lot of people," says Miller. "For example, some would say a work of visual music does not even need a musical soundtrack, but the original judging was done using a very broad definition of the term."

*[See SIGGRAPH Art Gallery, Page 18]*



Dennis Miller was invited by SIGGRAPH to curate two hours from the recent 2007 Northeastern University Visual Music Marathon. His own work, *White Noise*, will be included in the presentation. © Dennis Miller.

#### [SIGGRAPH Art Gallery, from Page 17]

Miller was invited by SIGGRAPH to curate two hours from the 12 and chose 21 works that represented a diversity of styles and approaches to Visual Music. "The works at SIGGRAPH represent just that diversity," Miller states. "There were many priorities for the judging, including geography, professional status (we wanted to include some student works), genre ("challenging" vs. "lite" vs. whatever), compositional approaches, and above all else, quality of work. We were also very keen on including works that represented a wide range of interpretations of the concept of visual music. There are a large number of really excellent works."

What are a few of Miller's favorites? "I would say Eva Toth (*Lajka's Memory*, music by Gyorgy Kurtag, Sr. and Gyorgy Kurtag Jr.) and Fran Hartnet's work (*Navigating the Pearl System*) are very representative. Then Jean Detheux (*Daydream Mechanics V Sketch 3*, music by Michael Oesterle) raises the bar a good bit, and Bum Lee (*Sports and Diversions*, music by Erik Satie) is entirely different. Also love the VJ work of Kasumi (*Ugoku*, music by James Lauer) — too many good ones!"

I would be remiss if I did not mention that Miller's own work, *White Noise*, will be included in *Selections from the 2007 Northeastern University Visual Music Marathon*.

Also being shown at Global Eyes will be selected works from the 10<sup>th</sup> Japan Media Arts Festival. This is a festival that focuses

on creative media art works utilizing the latest expression of technology. The festival also supports creative activity through the presentation of a broad base of various works and promotes the development of media arts in Japan by providing opportunities of appreciation for the artists and their work such as exhibitions and sanctioned events.

Another area of Global Eyes that will no doubt garner a great deal of interest is digital performance. One of the standout works, *Autocosm 2007*, is by a California artist, J. Walt Adamczyk. This work is a continuation of his ongoing *Autocosm* project that premiered at SIGGRAPH 2005, in which the artist creates artificial worlds in solo live performances. An *autocosm* is a self-contained personal world, apart from the world we all share. In this case, it is a world of growth and evolution, of life and transformation. It is a realtime 3D animation that is somewhat like *Fantasia*, only it is performed in front of a live audience, hence Adamczyk has dubbed his work, *Spontaneous Fantasia*. It is his way of bringing the acts of drawing and animating into the domain of live performance.

Adamczyk began this groundbreaking

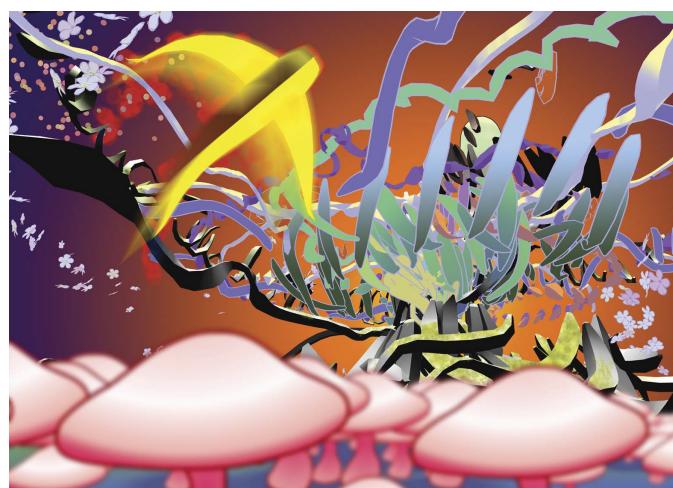
work in 2003 after years of work in real-time effects and animation for movies, TV and location-based entertainment. "Live performance is a way I get to connect with an audience — a way to let them share the fun of exploration that I experience in the studio," he explains. "For many years, I've created realtime systems that were used in the studio only, but the excitement that I had making things develop and evolve almost never made it out of the studio."

In his 2005 piece, *Autocosm: The Gardens of Thuban*, we ventured into a new world near the distant star Thuban (Alpha Draconis) in the constellation Draco. In the course of the piece, the world grows and, with the help of a catalyst, bursts into life. The action is an allegory of awakening and transformation.

"There is something magical to me about 3D objects moving through space," says Adamczyk. "Even a simple rotating shape captures my interest. Computer graphic techniques allow us to create these with a new facility — to achieve forms that are realistic or impossible, or something in between."

With these pieces, Adamczyk explores a new kind of performance that, like improvisational theater, never repeats itself. "These performance works are not complete, but always in a state of change. The only time a piece is finished is when I'm performing it — but it lasts only as the moment. With the push of a button, I erase it, and it is gone. It's my way of

[See SIGGRAPH Art Gallery, Page 19]



In the area of digital performance, a standout work is J. Walt Adamczyk's *Autocosm 2007*, a continuation of his ongoing *Autocosm* project that premiered at SIGGRAPH 2005.



For new fun ways to use a cellular phone, *Performing Arts for the Future Mobile Generation* by Hiroshi Matoba predicts new styles of play that children will enjoy with future mobile phones.

*[SIGGRAPH Art Gallery, from Page 18]*

breaking away from the notion that animation has to be a polished, precious artifact. It can be something more loose, more dynamic, more... spontaneous!" You can preview Adamczyk's work at [www.spontaneousfantasia.com](http://www.spontaneousfantasia.com).

Those of you who are interested in new fun ways to use your cellular phone will

no doubt enjoy *Performing Arts for the Future Mobile Generation* by Hiroshi Matoba, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture. These two performance works predict new styles of play that children will enjoy with future mobile phones. One is made from six units of wireless displays based on LCD technology. The other is based on three units of wireless LED projectors.

Although the Art Gallery is at different venues than the main exhibition, SIGGRAPH 2007 shuttle bus service will be available for round-trip transportation from the San Diego Convention Center to the performance venues at the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Cal-IT2) and the Center for Research in Computing and the Arts (CRCA) at the University of California, San Diego.

J. PAUL PESZKO is a freelance writer and screenwriter living in Los Angeles. He writes various features and reviews as well as short fiction. He has a feature comedy in development and has just completed his second novel. When he isn't writing, he teaches communications courses.

## Syd Mead to Keynote Softimage User Event

In its 18th year at SIGGRAPH, Softimage Co. announced details of its events & activities for the upcoming SIGGRAPH 2007 conference in San Diego, California (Aug. 5–9). Softimage will extend its presence at the show starting with the inaugural Customer Production Challenge, and FJORG!, the SIGGRAPH-sponsored iron-animator production competition. Softimage is also honored to host industry visionary Syd Mead at its annual user event, with a special introduction by SIGGRAPH 2007 conference chair, Joe Marks, from Walt Disney Feature Animation. To inspire and train the next generation of 3D artists, Softimage will present an education copy of SOFTIMAGE|XSI 3D modeling, rendering and animation software with a six-hour training DVD from Digital-Tutors to all of the SIGGRAPH student volunteers — a \$100,000 value donation to the SIGGRAPH student program.

"Softimage is having an extraordinary year with inspiring validation from artists

and technical directors who chose to use XSI software in their visual effects pipelines — from the Academy Award-winning *Happy Feet*, the box-office hit film *300* and the critically acclaimed Japanimation anime feature *Tekkon Kinkreet*, to this year's SIGGRAPH 'Best of Show' animated short *Ark*," said Marc Stevens, vp/gm for Softimage. "We are excited to take part in such a wide array of activities on and off the SIGGRAPH show floor with technology tools and training that will equip and inspire digital artists as they Face Tomorrow (this year's SIGGRAPH theme)," added Stevens.



Syd Mead.

### SOFTIMAGE ACTIVITIES AT SIGGRAPH 2007

#### Sunday, Aug. 5

*Softimage Production Challenge: Attack of the Jellybeans*

Four industry renowned XSI artists, including Todd Akita (PSYOP), David An-

drews (The Orphanage), Bradley Gabe (Stan Winston) and Greg Punchatz (Janimation), will take one day to model, rig, animate and light a character, bringing it from original concept drawing to final render. Hosted by Alex Lindsay (Pixel Corps), the goal of the Production Challenge is to demonstrate the superior non-linear workflow of XSI software. All SIGGRAPH attendees are invited to watch and learn from these industry leaders in action.

#### Monday, Aug. 6

*FJORG! (Monday - Tuesday, Aug. 6-7)*

3D animation artists will have the opportunity to use SOFTIMAGE|XSI software and a fully-rigged 3D character created by Christoph Schinko to compete in the first international FJORG! iron-animator challenge at SIGGRAPH.

#### Guerilla Studio

Softimage returns to the Guerilla Studio this year offering conference attendees the opportunity to get hands-on experience and training for the latest

*[See Syd Mead, Softimage, Page 20]*

**[Syd Mead, SoftImage, from Page 19]**

version of SOFTIMAGE|XSI 6.02, the professional 3D modeling, rendering, character creation and animation software. For the first time ever in public, Softimage will offer hands-on training for its innovative new SOFTIMAGE|Face Robot, life-like facial animation system. Softimage's Jeff Wilson, will lead the Face Robot training, sharing his expertise on creating complex facial animations, from facial modeling, MoCap, editing and fine tuning facial rigs. XSI training will be lead by Nikki Bridgeman, Softimage's European Training Manager. Classes are limited.

**Tuesday, Aug. 7****Softimage User Event**

Softimage will host its annual User Event from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the Spreckels Theatre. SIGGRAPH 2007 chair, Joe Marks, of Walt Disney Feature Animation, will introduce industry luminary and world renowned "visual futurist" Syd Mead (*Tron, Blade Runner, Star Trek: The Motion Picture, Aliens*) to present the keynote address based on material from his new documentary *Visual Futurist: The Art & Life of Syd Mead*. Following a Softimage introduction by Marc Stevens, vp/gm for Softimage, 300 vfx supervisor Chris Watts — along with Daniel Leduc (vfx supervisor & producer) and Joseph Kasparian (textures & lighting lead) from Hybride, will present "A World of Antiquity — Making the Stylized Environments of Ancient Sparta." This lively presentation will share how concept, creation and techniques using XSI software helped forge the look and feel of 300. One lucky attendee at this year's Softimage User Event will win a new Dell M90 Laptop, a full license of SOFTIMAGE|XSI Essentials software, and a Softimage branded backpack — a \$6,000 value.

From Aug. 7-9, in booth # 503 at the San Diego Convention Center, Softimage will demonstrate the latest versions of its innovative software solutions.

**SOFTIMAGE|XSI**, professional 3D modeling, rendering and animation software

**SOFTIMAGE|Face Robot**, lifelike facial animation

Softimage will also have a wide array of guest customer presentations at its booth, including: Capcom (*Lost Planet* game for Xbox 360), Blur (*A Gentleman's Duel*), CafeFX (*Pan's Labyrinth*), The Mill, Janimation, Stage 3 Media (Ron Martin, vfx director on *Sanctuary*) and a special making-of presentation by Grzegorz Jonkajtys and Marcin Kobyleci for Ark, winner of this year's SIGGRAPH 2007 "Best of Show" award in the Electronic Theater.

For more information about Softimage at SIGGRAPH, please visit: [www.softimage.com/events/sig07](http://www.softimage.com/events/sig07).

*Softimage Co. (www.softimage.com), a subsidiary of Avid Technology Inc. provides*

*intuitive, production proven tools that free 3D artists to create the world's most compelling characters in the film, broadcast, post-production and games industries. Its flagship product, SOFTIMAGE|XSI is one of the most complete and intuitive character animation solution available. SOFTIMAGE|FACE ROBOT is the first commercial toolset that accelerates facial animation that empowers 3D artists to create, refine and repurpose high-quality, lifelike facial animation in less time than traditional solutions.*

*Avid Technology Inc. (www.avid.com) is the world leader in digital nonlinear media creation, management and distribution solutions, enabling film, video, audio, animation, games and broadcast professionals to work more efficiently, productively and creatively.*

## SIGGRAPH 2007 Selects EA's Glenn Entis as Featured Speaker

As part of its new expanded speaker format, SIGGRAPH 2007 has named Glenn Entis, chief visual officer of Electronic Arts (EA), as the first of three featured speakers. Entis will speak about recent accomplishments and upcoming challenges for interactive graphics in videogames.

The former ceo of DreamWorks Interactive, Entis' responsibilities at EA include working with the world's finest gaming industry artists and designers on the pre-production and visual development of game software. In addition to his professional achievements, Entis also serves on the board of governors for the Emily Carr College of Art and on the advisory board for the Masters of Digital Media, a new graduate school program at Great Northern Way in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

"We are honored to have such a seasoned industry leader speak at SIGGRAPH 2007," stated Joe Marks, SIGGRAPH 2007 conference chair from Walt Disney Feature Animation. "Glenn is a



Glenn Entis.

leading member of the computer-graphics community, a compelling visionary, and a long-time SIGGRAPH attendee. We look forward to hearing his insights into the future direction of the industry."

For 2007, SIGGRAPH will replace the single Keynote Speaker presentation with three featured speakers that will represent different key areas in an effort to enhance the SIGGRAPH attendee experience. The three featured speakers will discuss respectively the themes of industry/commerce, art and research as they relate to the SIGGRAPH community.

## Scott McCloud Selected as Second SIGGRAPH Featured Speaker

Graphic novelist Scott McCloud has been selected as the second featured speaker at SIGGRAPH 2007.

For 2007, SIGGRAPH will replace the single keynote speaker presentation with three featured speakers that will discuss the themes of industry/commerce, art or research as they relate to the SIGGRAPH community.

The focus of McCloud's presentation will center on the fast-changing American comics field. Bolstered by the literary ambitions of the "graphic novel" movement, a flood of international influences and the growing importance of new technologies, the comics landscape shifts regularly in surprising and increasingly unpredictable directions. McCloud will put all these trends into

perspective in a visual presentation.

McCloud has been writing and drawing comics since 1984. His book *Understanding Comics* was a *New York Times* notable book for 1994 and is available in 16 languages. His new book, *Making Comics* explores the art and craft of telling stories visually. He is well known throughout many industries. In fact, *Sin City* and *300* creator Frank Miller, called McCloud "just about the smartest guy in comics."

As an accomplished public speaker, McCloud has presented visual lectures on comics and technology at computer events, corporations, universities, film and music festivals and government organizations, including Harvard University, Microsoft and the MIT Media Lab.

"Scott brings a fresh and invigorating perspective to SIGGRAPH. Storyline and creativity play an increasingly important role in print, film, television and gaming," stated Joe Marks, SIGGRAPH 2007 Conference chair from Walt Disney Animation Studios. "His timely presentation will appeal to a wide audience."

Glenn Entis, chief visual officer of Electronic Arts (EA), was selected as the first speaker. Entis will discuss recent accomplishments and upcoming challenges for interactive graphics in videogames.

## V.S. Ramachandran Selected as Final SIGGRAPH Featured Speaker

SIGGRAPH 2007 announced the selection of Vilayanur S. Ramachandran as the third Featured Speaker at the 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques, Aug. 5–9 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California. Ramachandran is the director of the Center for Brain and Cognition and a professor at the University of California, San Diego. Topics will include his groundbreaking research in cognition and perception and their impact on the research field and daily life.

For 2007, SIGGRAPH will replace the single Keynote Speaker presentation with Featured Speakers that will represent different key areas in an effort to enhance the SIGGRAPH attendee experience. The other two Featured Speakers are graphic novelist Scott McCloud and Glenn Entis, chief visual officer of Electronic Arts. McCloud will discuss

several trends in a visual presentation, while Entis will discuss recent accomplishments and upcoming challenges for interactive graphics in videogames.

Ramachandran is an internationally acclaimed scholar and physician best known for his research in neurology, cognition and visual perception. He has also received various awards and honors that include an honorary doctorate from Connecticut College, the Ariens Kappers Medal from the Royal Nederlands Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Neurology's Presidential Lecture Award and the Padma Bhushan award from the President of India, the country's second highest civilian honor. Also, *Newsweek* recently named Ramachandran as one of the most important people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"We are honored to have such an internationally acclaimed leader at SIGGRAPH 2007. V.S. is an excellent speaker

and will provide unmatched insights in perception and cognition that are key areas in the SIGGRAPH research community," stated Joe Marks, SIGGRAPH 2007 Conference chair from Walt Disney Animation Studios.

Ramachandran has frequently lectured on art, visual perception, and the brain and is a trustee for the San Diego Museum of Art. He is also editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, and has published more than 120 papers in scientific journals internationally.

**[CAF Sets Record, from Page 1]**

jury's ability to appreciate the intricacy of each film—especially the award winners. A total of 134 submissions were accepted.

"I'm thrilled with the jury's selections. With the record number of submissions, our material truly represents the best of the best in all of the show categories," stated Paul Debevec, SIGGRAPH 2007 Computer Animation Festival chair from the University of Southern California's Institute for Creative Technologies. "This year's show weaves together amazing visuals from numerous disciplines into a single mind-altering experience."

SIGGRAPH's location on the West Coast, closer to the large animation studios, makes 2007 a notable year for studio-produced shorts with Pixar's *Lifted*, Blue Sky's *No Time for Nuts* and Blur Studio's *A Gentleman's Duel* lending heavy-hitting strength to the Electronic Theater show.

"The Electronic Theater also presents a watershed year for fluid simulation in feature films. Scanline's 300's Liquid Battlefield, Sony Pictures Animation's *Surf's Up* and Digital Domain and Industrial Light & Magic's *Pirates of the Caribbean* all feature uniquely executed but beautifully believable digital oceans and waves," added Debevec. The Electronic Theater will also provide an early peek at Sony Pictures Imageworks' much anticipated photoreal computer graphics feature *Beowulf*.

SIGGRAPH 2007 Computer Animation Festival highlights as selected by Paul Debevec include:

***Ark* (Best of Show)**

Grzegorz Jonkajtys and Marcin Kobylecki, [www.thearkfilm.com](http://www.thearkfilm.com), Poland

An unknown virus has destroyed almost the entire human population. Oblivious to the true nature of the disease, the only remaining survivors escape to the sea. In great ships, they set off in search of uninhabited land untouched by the deadly virus. So begins the exodus, led by one man...

***Dreammaker* (Jury Honors)**

Leszek Plichta, Institute of Animation, Visual Effects, and Digital Post Production, Filmakademie Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany

In the past, this talented dreammaker created the most beautiful dreams for people. Now, he lives in solitude focused on only one purpose—the creation of a special dream—his dream...

***En Tus Brazos* (Award of Excellence)**

Francois-Xavier Goby, Edouard Jouret, Matthieu Landour, Supinfocom Valenciennes, France

A remarkable tale of the greatest tango dancer of the 1920's who finds himself confined to a wheelchair after an unfortunate accident. Thanks to his loving wife, he recovers the use of his legs just in time for the most magical dance of his life.

***Lifted***

Gary Rydstrom, Director, Pixar Animation Studios

A bumbling young alien student from a distant world tests the patience of an increasingly weary instructor as he attempts a first-time abduction of an innocently slumbering farmer in *Lifted*, the comical latest short film from Pixar Animation Studios.

***A Gentleman's Duel***

Francisco Ruiz & Sean McNally, Directors, Blur Studio

In *A Gentleman's Duel*, a new short film presented by Oscar-Nominated Blur Studio, this time-honored tradition is re-imagined with a fantastic blend of boisterous characters and over-the-top comedic action. A seemingly innocent tea party takes a turn for the dramatic when two imperious aristocrats suddenly find themselves competing for the affections of the same fair lady.

***Travelers: Snowball***

Dan Lemmon, Weta Digital Ltd., New Zealand

*Travelers: Snowball* begins with a man walking down a steep street in San Francisco. He crashes through a yard sale,

before tumbling head-over-heels down the hill. As the man continues to roll he creates a "snowball effect," accumulating objects from the street to create an enormous ball of urban debris.

**A VFX Journey Through *Pan's Labyrinth* With CafeFX**

CafeFX

When the harsh world of the Spanish Civil War becomes too horrific to bear in director Guillermo del Toro's visually rich and complex *Pan's Labyrinth*, young Ofelia escapes inward, finding in her imagination the power to heal her real-world wounds. Challenged to create the mythical creatures and landscapes of Ofelia's fantasy, CafeFX embarked on an artistic and technical journey spanning four months of location shooting and five months of post-production.

For a complete festival lineup, visit [www.siggraph.org/s2007/attendees/caf/](http://www.siggraph.org/s2007/attendees/caf/).

**[FJORG! CG Contest from Page 1]**

"Gladiator-style" audience and judging panel at the San Diego Convention Center.

To earn the title of "Viking Animator" and several other prizes, each team will be tasked with creating a 15-second (or longer) animation, based on a theme to be provided during the FJORG! kickoff on Aug. 6, 2007. In the spirit of true competition, FJORG! will test contestants' skill, talent, creativity, teamwork, and physical endurance — all throughout multiple staged distractions such as live music, belly dancing, acrobatics and martial arts performances.

"We hope that everyone will be inspired by the enthusiasm born out of this event," said Patricia Beckmann-Wells, SIGGRAPH 2007 FJORG! chair. "The event will be full of humor, cheering and suspense for our participants and audience. FJORG! will be a fantastic experience that brings dedicated animators out into the open to show the world what they can do."

FJORG! contestants will be required to complete the animations using their own talents and skills, along with technology assets supplied at the event (outside resources are not permitted). Teams will be judged by a panel of industry experts, including recruiters from top graphics, feature film, animation, and game companies such as Pixar Animation Studios, Industrial Light & Magic, DreamWorks Animation and Sony Pictures Imageworks. Competitors will have access to the following applications:

- Sound and voiceover selections
- Rigged model for Maya
- 1 HP xw9400 Workstations with Dual Core AMD Opteron processors
- Autodesk 3ds Max
- Autodesk Maya
- Macromedia Flash
- Adobe Photoshop and After Effects
- Softimage|XSI

In addition, members of teams that successfully create an animation sequence of at least 15 seconds in length will be awarded a full conference pass for the remainder of SIGGRAPH 2007 and a

ticket to the Electronic Theater.

With support provided by AMD, DreamWorks Animation and HP, FJORG! is being held in conjunction with SIGGRAPH 2007, the 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on computer graphics and interactive techniques at the San Diego Convention Center, Aug. 5–9.

For video of the competition and the winning animations, visit <http://workstations.tv> throughout SIGGRAPH. For more information about the competition in general, visit [www.siggraph.org/s2007/presenters/fjorg/](http://www.siggraph.org/s2007/presenters/fjorg/).

*The Assoc. for Computing Machinery (ACM)*  
SIGGRAPH sponsors SIGGRAPH 2007. ACM is an educational and scientific society uniting the world's computing educators, researchers, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development and professional networking.

Advanced Micro Devices ([www.amd.com](http://www.amd.com)) is a leading global provider of innovative processing solutions in the computing, graphics and consumer electronics markets. AMD is dedicated to driving open innovation, choice and industry growth by delivering superior customer-centric solutions that empower consumers and businesses worldwide.

DreamWorks Animation is devoted to producing high-quality family entertainment through the use of computer-generated (CG) animation. Utilizing world-class creative talent and state-of-the-art technological capabilities, the company is committed to making two computer-animated feature films a year that appeal to a broad movie-going audience.

HP ([www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)) focuses on simplifying technology experiences for all of its customers — from individual consumers to the largest businesses. With a portfolio that spans printing, personal computing, software, services and IT infrastructure, HP is among the world's largest IT companies, with revenue totaling \$97.1 billion for the four fiscal quarters ended April 30, 2007.

**[Animation Mentor from Page 1]**

films, including Academy Award-nominated *Stuart Little*. He was animation supervisor on *The Polar Express*, for which he received a Visual Effects Society (VES) nomination, and was supervising animator on *Stuart Little 2*, for which he received a VES Award for Best Character Animation in an Animated Motion Picture.

Animation Mentor's graduation ceremony will take place Monday, Aug. 6, at 2:00 pm at the San Diego Convention Center, followed by a 5:30 pm reception at the W Hotel. Students will earn a certified diploma in Advanced Studies in Character Animation from the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education.



David Schaub.

Based in Berkeley, California, AnimationMentor.com ([www.animationmentor.com](http://www.animationmentor.com)) is an online animation school at which top working professionals teach character animation to students worldwide. Opened March 2005, the school offers an 18-month program built from the ground up by its founders, Bobby Beck, Shawn

Kelly and Carlos Baena, whose combined credits include Cars, Transformers and Ratatouille. AnimationMentor.com's California-certified curriculum includes student mentoring; expert audio/video rich media lectures; live, realtime, interactive sessions (web classes); eCritiques; and 24/7 online creative community.

# NaturalMotion Releases morpheme 1.1

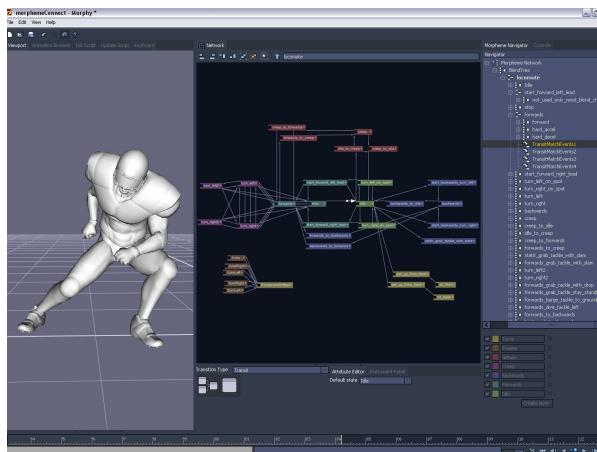
NaturalMotion announced the immediate release of morpheme 1.1, the latest version of its powerful animation engine and tool chain. Featuring new network management and navigation tools, source control support and frame buffering capabilities, morpheme 1.1 is robust middleware designed to give developers and animators unprecedented creative control over the look of their final in-game animation by allowing them to author and preview blends, blend trees and transition graphs in realtime. morpheme 1.1 is available on PlayStation3, Xbox 360 and PC. NaturalMotion will highlight morpheme 1.1 during SIGGRAPH 2007, booth #603.

"morpheme has enjoyed tremendous adoption since its March launch and is being used by leading game studios for several AAA titles and MMOs," said Torsten Reil, ceo of NaturalMotion. "morpheme 1.1 continues what we started in 1.0, which is to focus on designing tools that deliver ease-of-use and run-time performance that allow developers and animators to create amazing in-game character performances."

morpheme consists of two components: morpheme:runtime and morpheme:connect. morpheme:runtime is a run-time engine optimized for PS3, Xbox 360 and PC, and ships with full source code. morpheme:connect is a powerful 3D authoring application that allows animators to graphically author blend trees and transition logic (based on Hierarchical Finite State Machines), modify and edit parameters through sliders and view the results in realtime. morpheme is designed as a flexible and open system and does not require the licensing of any other product. morpheme is also designed to seamlessly integrate with other middleware and DCC applications.

New features in morpheme 1.1 include:

- Graphical layers for easy network management and navigation
- Frame buffering and scrubbing of live networks allows straightforward review



and debugging of character motion

- Navigator graph tree for easy hierarchy navigation
- Source control support

*NaturalMotion Ltd. ([www.naturalmotion.com](http://www.naturalmotion.com)) is the first company to create 3D character animation software based on Dynamic Motion Synthesis (DMS), a technology that utilizes Adaptive Behaviors and artificial intelligence to*

*simulate the human-nervous system. Based on Oxford University research on the control of body movements, NaturalMotion's euphoria synthesizes 3D character animation in realtime on PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and PC, thus creating unique game moments and previously unachievable interactivity. NaturalMotion's other DMS product endorphin creates off-line animation an order of*

*magnitude faster than traditional techniques, and is widely used in the film and games industries, with customers such as Sony, Giant Killer Robots, The Mill, Capcom, Namco and Konami. NaturalMotion's third product, morpheme, is the industry's first graphically authorable animation engine designed to give animators full control over the look of their animations in-game.*

## GenArts to Showcase Sapphire Plug-ins



GenArts will be exhibiting at SIGGRAPH 2007. It will feature Sapphire Plug-ins, a collection of more than 200 image processing and synthesis effects, on a wide range of host platforms in the Plug-in Pavilion, booth 321.

GenArts Sapphire Plug-ins have set the standard for sophisticated, organic visual effects, which natively integrate with the industry's leading editing and

compositing systems. Visitors to the booth will be given demonstrations of the latest Sapphire Plug-ins releases for: Adobe After Effects & Premiere Pro, Apple Final Cut Pro & Shake, Avid AVX Products and Autodesk Combustion.

*Founded in 1996 in Cambridge, Mass., GenArts Inc. ([www.genarts.com](http://www.genarts.com)) is the premier provider [See GenArts, Page 25]*

# Microsoft Surface To Be Featured

Microsoft Surface, the first in a new category of surface computing products from Microsoft that breaks down traditional barriers between people and technology, will be featured at SIGGRAPH 2007, the 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques held Aug. 5–9, at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California.

Surface turns an ordinary tabletop into a vibrant, dynamic surface that provides effortless interaction with all forms of digital content through natural gestures, touch, and physical objects. The intuitive user interface works without a traditional mouse or keyboard, allowing people to interact with content and information on their own or collaboratively with friends and families, just like in the real world. Surface is a 30-inch display in a table-like form factor that small groups can use at the same time. From digital finger painting to a virtual concierge, Surface brings natural interaction to the digital world in a new and exciting way. Beginning at the end of this year, consumers will be able to in-



teract with Surface in hotels, retail establishments, restaurants and public entertainment venues.

"This is just one of many SIGGRAPH opportunities to experience cutting-edge technology - for products both months and years away," stated Joe Marks, SIGGRAPH 2007 Conference chair from Walt Disney Animation Studios. "In fact, surface computing in its early stages was showcased at previous SIGGRAPH's, and we're very excited to feature the technology in its market-ready form in San Diego."

For more details on Surface, visit [www.surface.com](http://www.surface.com).

#### [GenArts, from Page 24]

of digital visual effects plug-ins for the film, broadcast and video industries. *Sapphire Plug-ins*, equips digital artists with a collection of more than 200 state-of-the-art image processing and synthesis effects such as: Glows, EdgeRays, LensFlare, Lightning, FilmEffect, Warps and Textures. The effects seamlessly integrate into a number of editing and compositing systems, including: Adobe After Effects and Premiere Pro; Apple Final Cut Pro and Shake; Avid AVX Products; Autodesk Compositing & Editing Systems and

*Combustion; Eyeon Fusion; Sony XPR1; and Quantel generationQ products.*

*Sapphire Plug-ins have been used extensively in an array of television programs, music videos and feature films, including: Pirates of the Caribbean franchise, Spider-Man franchise, Superman Returns, The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, The Lord of the Rings trilogy, the second Star Wars trilogy, Sin City, The Matrix trilogy, the X-Men franchise, Titanic, Lost and CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.*

## ANIMATION FLASH

SIGGRAPH 2007 SPECIAL EDITION

An ANIMATION WORLD NETWORK Publication

### AWN, Inc.

6525 Sunset Blvd.  
Garden Suite 10  
Los Angeles, CA 90028  
United States  
Phone: (323) 606-4200  
Fax: (323) 466-6619  
[info@awn.com](mailto:info@awn.com)  
[www.awn.com](http://www.awn.com)

### PUBLISHING

#### PRESIDENT

Ron Diamond  
**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**  
Dan Sarto

### OPERATIONS

**GENERAL MANAGER**  
Gina Ruiz  
**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**  
Shannon Muir

### EDITORIAL

**AWN EDITOR**  
Sarah Baisley  
**VFXWORLD EDITOR**  
Bill Desowitz  
**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Rick DeMott

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Darlene Chan

### CONTRIBUTION

**AUTHORS**  
Rick DeMott  
Bill Desowitz  
Taylor Jessen  
J. Paul Peszko

### WEB DEV / ART

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Deron Yamada  
**WEB DEVELOPER**  
Mark Rebec  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Carol Porteous  
**GRAPHIC ASSISTANT**  
Josh Bitzer

### ADVERTISING

#### SALES

Dan Sarto - [dan@awn.com](mailto:dan@awn.com)  
Andy Strum - [andy@awn.com](mailto:andy@awn.com)  
Phone: (323) 606-4218  
Tucker Maloney - [tucker@awn.com](mailto:tucker@awn.com)  
Phone: (323) 606-4212

Please send your news for future editions to [editor@awn.com](mailto:editor@awn.com)