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DVD MAGAZINE
Animation, VFX and motion graphics for design and advertising
We knew this was going to be one of the most challenging projects we’d ever undertaken,” recalls Linds Redding, CD at Department of Motion Graphics in Auckland. “From the outset, we realized we were going to need some specialized help.” Enter Fusion Cgi Studios in Santa Monica, the secret weapon of many A-list commercial and feature film studios who need complex fluid and particle effects.

Fusion Cgi Cgi super Mark Stasiuk: “Creating the illusion of fluid without destroying the details of the geometry is tricky. Fluid looks most realistic when it’s in natural forms. As it transforms toward a detailed shape, you have to script the motion so its behavior looks and performs naturally. You also have to make sure only the exact quantity of fluid that will fit on the surface of the geometry is used – add too much fluid or distribute it badly and it will turn into a giant glob. Once it’s on the shape, you don’t want it to look like an ice-sculpture so you have to develop ways of making the fluid continue to move even as a still object.”

Watch Behind the Scenes on the DVD.

For Sugar
Producer: Pat Cox
Writer: Nigel Corbett
For Department of Motion Graphics
Director: Linds Redding
Producer: Kiri Hay

For Fusion Ci Studios
CG super: Mark Stasiuk
EP: Lauren Millar
RealFlow: Max Daniels, Victor Lubbe

Toolkit
RealFlow

The project – based on the legend of Chinese poet Sima Xiangru who’s soulful music caused water to rise up in fanciful shapes – began with 1000 fps Phantom footage shot in China by director Steve Gordon, continued with the addition of complex and pristine CG from Toronto’s Loki VFX and finished with online and compositing at Track and Field.

Loki VFX supervisor Gene Dreitser: “From a CG perspective, the scariest things you can hear a director say are ‘Water’, ‘1000 fps’ and ‘1080p’. When you hear all three in the same sentence, you know it’s going to be a long couple-o-weeks.

“The biggest challenge was to match the level of complexity and the level of interest of the live footage. The fluid surfaces started off as regular polygons, then were translated into volumes (SOX), then into a particle system, then animated, then finally back to polygons so they could be rendered. We were also faced with large data sets – each frame’s scene description file was approximately 500MB – taking upwards of an hour to render and some taking far longer. Meaning, the margin for error was narrow.”

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For Bravo Asia
Creative: Kenneth Ip

For Sons and Daughters
Director: Steve Gordon

For Cheers Films Shanghai
EPS: Anthony Tse, Eugenia Chang

For Loki Visual Effects
Supervisor: Gene Dreitser
Producer: France Daigle

For Rooster
Editor: Bob Kennedy

For Tin Pan Sound and Music
Composition/sound design/mix: Matt Davis, Mike De Rye

For Track and Field
Colourist: Elaine Ford
Toolkit
Avid, Inferno, Houdini, Mantra, Flame

For Notch
Colourist: Kristi-Ann Webster, Kevin Riley

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