

Water Goes Bananas at DMG and Fusion CI Studios!

The fluid fx gurus at Fusion CIS morph drinking water into an intelligent being with a spritely character for DMG

Fusion CI Studios and Department of Motion Graphics pooled talents recently to create this lively spot for New Zealand creative agency, Sugar and client, Fonterra. Fonterra's new "smart" water, "Whole", leaps into the air then transforms itself into shape after shape -- first a brain, then a bridge, then bananas -- displaying a vigorous character and life of its own.



"From the moment we first laid eyes on the storyboard, we knew this was going to be one of the most challenging projects we had ever undertaken at DMG," says Linds Redding, Creative Director. "If we had grasped at the time, just how challenging - we might well have thought twice about saying 'yes' with such unseemly haste. From the outset, we realised we were going to need some specialist help and we were lucky enough to fall into league with the brilliant Mark Stasiuk of Fusion CI Studios in Santa Monica, California..."

CG fluids remain among the most confounding effects to achieve natural looks and behaviors, and to push that even further by morphing cg fluid into specific shapes demands advanced skill. Mark Stasiuk, co-owner and CG sup at Fusion CI Studios was very excited about DMG's project as fluid morphing behavior is a technology his studio has been developing. To add the challenge of applying these new methods to a spot where fluid is a mischievous & clever main character was exhilarating... if not daunting.

"When we saw DMG's treatment we were keen to get involved," says Mark, whose studio is well known for producing advanced fluid fx (and just completed the first ever underwater explosion using RealFlow for Asylum VFX on The Curious Case of Benjamin Button). "It was the perfect chance to really push our new morphing technology to achieve some unique fluid fx that we haven't seen outside feature film."

The most challenging shot, both technically and artistically was one continuous 650-frame shot, done in a single, complex simulation, where 'Whole' water transforms from puddle to brain to bridge to bananas.



“Fluid looks most realistic and fluid-like when it’s in its natural fluid forms -- droplets, puddles, streams, splashes,” explains Mark. “When you push fluid into a specific geometric shape, you’re forcing it to perform unnaturally, while still demanding it look like fluid. As the fluid transforms toward a highly detailed shape, you have to sculpt its motion so its behavior looks and performs naturally. In addition, you have to make sure only the exact quantity of fluid that will fit on the surface of the geometry is attracted to the surface. If you add too much fluid or distribute it badly, it will turn into a giant glob and you won’t see the details of the object. And once it’s on the shape, you don’t want it to look like a static ice-sculpture, so you have to develop ways of making the fluid continue to move even as a still object, creating the illusion of fluid without destroying the details of the geometry. It’s tricky.”

The key to success was the open and ongoing communication among Fusion, DMG, Sugar and Fonterra, as they sought that delicate balance between creative vision and the bounds of technology.

“It was a very interactive process” says Linds. “We would decide how we wanted the water to look and behave at any given point, and Mark would go away and write a piece of code that would give us the controls we needed to achieve what we wanted. We had a live Skype chat feed running constantly, and exchanged Quicktime movies and test renders via ftp daily.”

“DMG was an outstanding group to work with,” adds Mark. “They gave us the time and creative space we needed to make the fluids work, and had brilliant ideas on how to get the most out of the water. On top of that, their great camera work and lighting made the water look fabulous. The teamwork on this project created a startlingly distinctive and stunning piece that speaks for itself.”

The Whole project manifests a perfect working model for these tough economic times --two studios collaborating on a unique & challenging project by combining their strengths to create outstanding results.

We specialize exclusively in fluid & particle fx, so we don’t compete with our clients, we offer them a resource,” says Lauren Millar, co-founder and executive producer at Fusion. “Photo-real fluid fx demand detailed knowledge, methodologies and tools. Because that’s our focus, our clients come to us for their fluid fx rather than spending time & money to get up-to-speed on complicated fluids when awarded a project requiring them. The end result is a product that is infinitely better than each studio could do on its own. It’s a superb working model.”

See the commercial at: http://www.fusioncis.com/press/Whole30_Brand-Desktop.m4v

About:

Fusion CI Studios: Specializing in high-end fluid & particle fx for television, commercials and feature film, Fusion provides fluid asset packages, rendered images, fluid fx team supervision, consultation, pipeline development and tool-building. Fusion's latest feature film project involved creating the first ever underwater explosion using RealFlow for Asylum VFX on The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.

Department of Motion Graphics: A creatively-lead animation studio based in Auckland, New Zealand that specializes in designing and crafting unique, high quality motion graphics and animation solutions for advertising, broadcasting and film. Using a combination of traditional and computer based animation techniques and mixing 2D and 3D elements, DMG creates distinctive personalities for clients and their brands.

Contact:

Lauren Millar,
Co-Founder/Executive Producer
Fusion CI Studios
310-928-1483 studio
310-663-8780 cell
www.fusioncis.com
lauren@fusioncis.com

Kiri Hay
Executive Producer
Department of Motion Graphics
+00 (64) 9 377 2692
<http://dmgltd.co.nz/>
kiri@dmgltd.co.nz