



Ideas Realized for Chinese Epic 'Seven Swords' With Autodesk's Digital Film Pipeline

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SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Aug. 25 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK) today announced that Seven Swords, a new epic Chinese feature film by Director Tsui Hark, was realized with six of Autodesk's media and entertainment solutions. Based on Liang Yu-Shen's classic novel "Seven Swordsmen from Mount Tian," the film will be released worldwide in fall 2005.

Seven Swords is an action-packed "wuxia" film -- a distinct martial arts chivalry genre in Chinese literature and cinema. Set in the early 1600s, Seven Swords brings warriors together to protect the Martial Village from a ruthless military official. All filming took place in China in less than one year, with most sets built from scratch and then enhanced in post-production.

Australian post-production facility Digital Pictures Iloura was the lead post-production house for Seven Swords. To create the film's stunning visuals, the post house employed its Autodesk film pipeline, which includes Autodesk 3ds Max animation software, Autodesk Combustion desktop visual effects software, Autodesk's Discreet Smoke editing system, and Autodesk's Discreet Inferno and Discreet Flame visual effects systems. As part of Seven Swords' digital intermediate process, sister company Digital Pictures Melbourne performed conforming and digital grading with Autodesk's Discreet Lustre system.

Ineke Majoor, visual effects producer at Digital Pictures Iloura, said, "Director Tsui Hark chose to work with Digital Pictures on Seven Swords because we offer a total film solution. Our post-production and digital intermediate capabilities combine the best in visual effects and digital color grading. Autodesk's systems and software are a key component of our competitive advantage." In total, Digital Pictures delivered 130 visual effects shots and 200 wire removal shots, along with the final digital grading of Seven Swords.

In Seven Swords, 3ds Max software was used along with hand animation to create a complex, computer-generated spider weapon. The weapon has several chains spinning randomly from a central axis. Many small blades are attached to the chains and react together, giving the impression of restrained chaos.

The Lustre system enabled digital artists to maintain a level of realism in Seven Swords while creating specific looks for the film. For example, the Martial Village location looks peaceful and primitive, contrasted with the danger of the Pearly Gate Outpost and the crispness of Mount Heaven.

"The Mount Heaven sequence required a surreal quality to match the dramatic Photoshop references provided by the director," explained Lustre artist Stanley Lopuszanski of Digital Pictures Melbourne. "We used Lustre to integrate some heavy matte painted landscapes that were designed to simulate a real, yet mystical, environment. These had elements with their own distinct visual effects look that we had to match into the surrounding live shots."

Digital Pictures was able to offer a strong collaboration between digital grading and visual effects. The two disciplines converged in the Lustre suite with visual effects supervisor Peter Webb on hand to enhance the traditional grading skills of Lopuszanski.

Lopuszanski added, "The Lustre system provides a lot of choices and enables us to draw free-hand shapes to easily isolate objects or specific areas. We can thus work on individual components of the image as well as tracking them in a moving shot, making the grading process more creative and efficient."

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc. is wholly focused on ensuring that great ideas are turned into reality. With six million users, Autodesk is the world's leading software and services company for the manufacturing, infrastructure, building, media and entertainment and wireless data services fields. Autodesk's solutions help customers create, manage and share their data and digital assets more effectively. As a result, customers turn ideas into competitive advantage by becoming more productive, streamlining project efficiency and maximizing profits.

Founded in 1982, Autodesk is headquartered in San Rafael, California. For additional information about Autodesk, please visit <http://www.autodesk.com>.

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Contact: Roohi Saeed, 514-954-7296

Email: roohi.saeed@autodesk.com

CONTACT:

Roohi Saeed of Autodesk,

+1-514-954-7296, or roohi.saeed@autodesk.com.

Web site: <http://www.autodesk.com>