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House, True Blood, Bones, CSI, Californication and More Shaped With Autodesk Tools

November 19, 2008

Majority of This Season's Most Popular Shows Benefit from Visual Effects Technology

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Nov. 19 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- This year's fall television schedule features content created with the full range of Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK) entertainment solutions. From Mad Men and Sons of Anarchy; to NCIS, Entourage, Smallville, Pushing Daisies and Stargate: Atlantis; TV programs are advancing creativity through Autodesk Media & Entertainment technology.

Los Angeles-based Zoic Studios' roster includes some of television's most watched programming. To help shape its work on CSI, Eureka, Eli Stone, True Blood and Reaper, Zoic turned to a suite of Autodesk products, including Autodesk Maya 3d animation, modeling and rendering software, the Autodesk Flame visual effects system and Autodesk Combustion compositing system. Zoic also uses Maya extensively on Fringe, J.J. Abrams' new science-fiction hit on Fox. "Fringe is an exciting show because each episode is unique and we are called upon to create a whole host of effects," remarked Andrew Orloff, VFX supervisor at Zoic. "Working with dozens of layers at that level of complexity, Maya software's customized scripting and editable histories are invaluable. Maya allows us to focus on the artistry and efficiently incorporate our client's needs."

For Showtime's serial killer drama Dexter, Canadian boutique shop Topix used Flame to create a teaser promo that shows the main character traveling through time via a computer-generated funhouse. "The biggest challenge was making it all fit together," said Topix VFX supervisor Marco Polsinelli. "Two days, different locations, different cameras, many lighting setups and loads of green screen. With Flame, we were able to handle the challenging opening, which was built entirely out of digital files of the sky, clouds, and matte paintings with glint and glow filters. We then seamlessly composited all elements into the previously shot footage."

NY and LA-based LOOK Effects employs Maya and Flame for its work on Pushing Daisies (ABC), Life (NBC), Bones (FOX) as well as Life on Mars (ABC). Mark Driscoll, founder and president, LOOK Effects said, "Autodesk's tools allow our artists and animators to create a truly diverse mix of effects. The visual styles of these shows reach from realism to extremely stylized and these tools are fundamental to the creative process."

CafeFX, well-known in the film world, ventured into television with HBO's epic mini-series John Adams, winning an Emmy Award for visual effects. The series' 320 visual effects shots ran the gamut from matte paintings to virtual set extensions to 3D effects. For a complex scene involving computer graphic (CG) water effects, Cafe used Autodesk Maya to animate the characters on the decks and the motion of the small boats. "Maya helped us use visual effects in support of the storytelling by enabling meticulous choreography of ship activity in Boston Harbor," stated Jeff Goldman, CafeFX's VFX supervisor.

For the color correction in post production, five-time Emmy winning post house LaserPacific Media Corporation looks to Autodesk Lustre digital color grading system to shape a number of hot shows such as AMC's Mad Men, ABC's Pushing Daisies, Starz' upcoming series Crash, CBS' Medium and the pilot for US version of the BBC hit Life on Mars. "Two years ago we applied our feature film knowledge to redefine the TV workflow from hardware to software-based and the Lustre system is our tool of choice," explained Leon Silverman, president at LaserPacific. "Lustre not only provides unprecedented power and saves time and money, but also allows us to create the magic of Hollywood."

Other studios that worked with Autodesk solutions to create content for the 2008-2009 TV season include:

- Encore Hollywood relies on the Autodesk Inferno visual effects system, Autodesk Fire editing finishing system and Autodesk 3ds Max to shape House (FOX), Mad Men (AMC), My Name is Earl (NBC), NCIS (USA) and Entourage (HBO) to name a few.
- Entity uses Maya, Flame and Inferno for their work on Smallville (CW), Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles (FOX) and episodes of Entourage.
- CIS Vancouver utilizes a combination of Flame, Inferno and/or Maya for its TV work on Stargate: Atlantis (SciFi), The L Word (Showtime) and Gemini Award-nominee Canadian hit The Guard.
- The Jim Henson Company relies upon Maya and mental ray for Sid the Science Kid (PBS).

About Autodesk

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