Autodesk Software Plays Starring Role in Creation of 'G.I. Joe' Movie

August 24, 2009

VFX Studios in California, London and Canada Craft Spectacular Effects Using Autodesk Flame, Maya, 3ds Max, Softimage, Mudbox, MotionBuilder and FBX

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Aug. 24 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK) salutes the hundreds of artists worldwide who collectively created close to 1,500 visual effects shots for this summer's action-packed movie "G.I. Joe: The Rise of the Cobra." Autodesk tools used to help create visual effects for G.I. Joe were Autodesk Flame, Autodesk Maya, Autodesk 3ds Max, Autodesk Softimage, Autodesk MotionBuilder, Autodesk Mudbox and Autodesk FBX software.

"Enabling creative collaboration is central to our software development strategy," said Stig Gruman vice president of digital entertainment, Autodesk Media & Entertainment. "'G.I. Joe' is a perfect illustration of the success of our strategy. The movie showcases the work of six extremely talented visual effects studios which used a range of Autodesk tools to bring this massive project together and deliver an astounding visual result."

Digital Domain (Hollywood) -- A crew of 175 worked for over a year to create 320 visual effects (VFX) shots for two major sequences -- a Paris chase scene that culminates in the destruction of the Eiffel Tower and a massive convoy attack. Digital Domain relied on Maya as its core animation, modeling, lighting, character scripting and rigging tool, and Mudbox for modeling sketches. Animation Supervisor Bernd Angerer said, "The Eiffel Tower was a huge model with extreme detail comprising millions of polygons. Using Maya, we were able to control this massive data load and get the work done. Maya is so strong in so many aspects, but the big winner is its openness to being embedded into a pipeline."

CIS (Hollywood and Vancouver) -- With 265 shots in five sequences for 20 minutes of visual effects, CIS called upon an arsenal of Autodesk tools to help create a variety of work that included hard-surface modeling, digital stunt doubles and virtual environments (G.I. Joe's HQ, the Sahara Desert, the energy shaft, an underwater obstacle course and a polar ice cap). "This film is bigger than big, and I literally could not imagine doing a show of this complexity without Maya and Flame," said CIS VFX Supervisor Bryan Hirota. "In addition to Maya, we used 3ds Max and the FumeFX plug-in to help create and render both fire and smoke dynamics, MotionBuilder to process motion capture data and Flame for the complex 2.5D and 3D compositing."

MPC (The Moving Picture Company) (London) -- MPC created 168 VFX shots, the majority of which were for an epic underwater action sequence on a giant rock face, the whole created as a digital environment. Leader of a 100-artist crew, MPC VFX Supervisor Greg Butler explained, "Having already worked on 'Poseidon' with Boyd Shermis, the same VFX supervisor as 'G.I. Joe,' we knew we were in good hands. For this film, we relied on Maya as our core tool, used Mudbox for metal bending and MotionBuilder for some motion capture work. Autodesk tools have become an industry-standard which makes the job easier for our own research and development team to write custom code. With FBX, we didn't have to write any special scripts or do much hoop jumping for data exchange, which made the process infinitely easier."

Prime Focus VFX (formerly known as Frantic Films VFX) (Hollywood, Winnipeg, Vancouver) -- The Prime Focus crew of 55 contributed 124 VFX shots that included previsualization, digital environments, liquid simulation and high-volume particle rendering. The action-packed finale, the bulk of Prime Focus' work, features an airplane being eaten away by Nanomites (a high-tech weapon that disintegrates metal), a huge digital environment and intense 3D cloud and sky environments. Chris Bond, senior VFX supervisor and president of Prime Focus VFX, said, "3ds Max and Maya were our tools of choice. We built a custom animation pipeline using 3ds Max along with our proprietary volumetric particle renderer Krakatoa to render out the billions and billions of particles required to create the Nanomite swarm."

CafeFX (Santa Maria) -- "It was exciting to be a part of bringing a great American icon to the big screen," said CafeFX Computer Graphics (CG) Supervisor Seth Lippman. The 50-artist crew created over 100 shots, including the complex organic facial manipulations of lead characters Destro, Zartan and NeoViper. He added, "We used Maya for character animation and camera matchmoving and Softimage for CG effects animation and lighting. We were particularly happy with the Softimage ICE (Interactive Creative Environment) dynamics engine and its ability to multi-thread simulations. Softimage is integrated with mental ray which creates a seamless handoff between effects and lighting. What's great about using Maya and Softimage is the flexibility they give to apply the right tools to suit the talent pool."

Framestore (London) -- Framestore created several large environment shots used in the film -- a helicopter taking off from an airbase in Afghanistan, a matte painting of Paris, a huge underground missile silo and a CG aircraft carrier on a stormy sea. "We had to do a lot of custom Python scripting on this film to get things exactly right," said Jon Thum, VFX supervisor at Framestore. He added, "The real advantage of Maya is its custom scripting. Maya is so flexible and extensible that it has been heavily integrated into our pipeline and is our tool of choice."

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc., is a world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, building and construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art Digital Prototyping solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are real. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about Autodesk, visit www.autodesk.com.

Contacts: Rama Dunayevich, 415-547-2472; Karen Raz, 310-450-1482

Email: rama.dunayevich@autodesk.com; karen@razpr.com

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO)
(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090824/SF64923)

SOURCE Autodesk, Inc.

Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090824/SF64923
http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO
http://photoarchive.ap.org
PRN Photo Desk, photodesk@prnewswire.com
PRN Photo Desk, photodesk@prnewswire.com
Web Site: http://www.autodesk.com
http://www.prnewswire.com