



Behind the Scenes: Academy Award Nominated Visual Effects Artists Tell How Discreet Software and Systems Help Them Realize Their Creative Vision

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SAN FRANCISCO, Mar 13, 2002 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Discreet Software Systems

-- Oscar(R) Nominee Industrial Light & Magic Detail How Inferno and Flame Were Used in Their Visual Effects Process

-- First-Time Nominee for Short Film-Animation, Fifty Percent Grey Creator Discusses Use of 3ds max

You might not hear its name mentioned in many Academy Award(R) acceptance speeches, but Discreet, a division of Autodesk, Inc.(Nasdaq:ADSK), has provided the software tools used by 95 percent of all nominees in the Visual Effects category for the past seven years. That tradition continues in 2002, with all three of this year's nominees in the Best Visual Effects category and one of the contenders for the Best Short Film-Animation award all using Discreet products. With the Academy Awards(R) ceremony just two weeks away, Discreet asked its customers for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at how these films were brought to the silver screen.

AI Artificial Intelligence
ILM

"We use inferno and flame because they offer a unique high-speed, high-quality compositing environment which allows us to manipulate high resolution film scans in quasi-real time," explained Chad Taylor, Sabre artist, ILM. "The director or visual effects supervisor can essentially have a visual brainstorming session with the Sabre artist. They can test ideas and quickly see if a particular approach is working. Directors appreciate the immediacy of the feedback and the ability to experiment freely."

"While working on AI, visual effects supervisors Dennis Muren and Scott Farrar were able to sit down with me and finalize key complex shots like the Flesh Fair and the spinach meltdown sequences," Taylor continued. "For the spinach shot, I tracked artwork to David's face before warping the flesh to reveal the mechanical eye beneath. Added realism was provided using the displacement mapping and shading tools of inferno's 3D environment."

Pearl Harbor
ILM, Asylum and Cinesite

"ILM completed more than 200 visual effects shots for director Michael Bay's Pearl Harbor," explained Rita Zimmerman, senior Sabre artist. "These shots included complex panoramas of Pearl Harbor requiring multiple layer composites with literally hundreds of live action, CG and pyrotechnics elements. The combination of intense action, long camera dollies across battlefields and visual effects supervisor Eric Brevig's insistence on historical accuracy, required not only the perfect integration of multiple elements but perfect attention to detail."

"When working with the high resolution imagery, the speed of flame and inferno were critical to meeting the tight deadlines of the project," continued Zimmerman. "With the Discreet tools we could quickly try multiple concepts on any given shot, testing the overall look and feel with many variations in a very short period of time. Because inferno is so fast at complex problem solving, we are often brought in when deadlines get tight."

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring
WETA, Rhythm & Hues, Digital Domain, Animal Logic, Oktobor, and
GMD

In this film, J.R.R. Tolkien's legendary epic about good against evil and the power of friendship and courage comes to life through astounding digital images and amazing visual effects. Tasked with realistically creating an entire fantasy world, the post-production houses did so in spades using Discreet's systems and software. Among the many effects created is a brilliantly rendered tidal wave of stampeding horses. Rhythm and Hues, based in Marina Del Rey, Calif., completed several complex visual-effects shots in The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. To produce and deliver the high quality results director Peter Jackson demanded, Rhythm and Hues' skilled team of artists relied on their vast set of quality tools, including Discreet's inferno and their in-house compositing software ICY. "inferno is the perfect solution for turning complex shots around fast," said Sean McPherson, 2D supervisor at Rhythm and Hues. "When time is of the essence, Discreet's inferno is the solution we consistently turn to for completing challenging effects shots -- fast. inferno has the most comprehensive tool set in our facility."

Fifty Percent Grey

In his Academy Award(R)-nominated 3D film for Best Animated Short, Ireland-based Ruairi Robinson tells the story of Sergeant, a character who wakes up alone, with only a big-screen TV for company, in a setting designed to offer eternal peace and tranquility. Produced by Zanita Films (<http://www.zanitafilms.com/>), the 3D animated short was made entirely by Robinson, a 3D animator, compositor and designer using Discreet's 3ds max software and Discreet character studio software for character rigging. Robinson began the film using 3ds max 3, upgraded to 3ds max 4 -- midway through production in January 2001 -- and went on to earn his

first Academy Award nomination in the process.

"3ds max has the best polygon modeler on the market and best all-round feature set," said Ruairi Robinson, Fifty Percent Grey's creator. "I don't think I could have done this film in any other package all by myself, considering how non-technical minded I am. I'm very happy working with Discreet software and will continue to do so for future projects."

Discreet salutes all of this year's nominees. The 74th Annual Academy Awards(R) will air on Sunday, March 24 at 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (8 p.m. EST).

About Discreet

Discreet, a division of Autodesk, Inc., is a worldwide leader in digital content creation, management, and distribution tools. Discreet develops systems and software for visual effects, animation, non-linear editing, broadcast production, and integrated infrastructure and workflow solutions. Discreet serves a broad range of markets involved in content creation, delivery, and use, including film and television postproduction, broadcast production, games, animation, multimedia for corporate, government, and education, and the rich media for the web.

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