



Oscar Winner Landreth's New Animated Short 'The Spine' Created With Autodesk Maya

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SAN RAFAEL, Calif., July 6, 2009 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- Filmmaker Chris Landreth's latest animated short film, "The Spine", was shaped with Autodesk, Inc.'s (Nasdaq: ADSK) Autodesk Maya 3D modeling, animation and rendering software. Having used Maya to shape his 2004 Oscar-winning short "Ryan", Landreth once again chose Maya to express his creative vision.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090706/SF42307>)

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO>)

"The Spine" is a psychologically driven film that uses bizarre imagery to tell the story of a couple trapped in a spiral of mutual destruction. Main characters Dan and Mary Rutherford evolve, adapt and break as they navigate an unhappy marriage. Landreth's unique animation style has characters literally wearing their lives on their bodies.

"Dan and Mary are in a toxic relationship that you see reflected in their physicality," explained Landreth. "Dan is reduced to a spineless being that melts over furniture, while Mary's body bloats with her problems. Autodesk Maya was used for modeling, texturing, animating, rigging and visual effects. The software has such a rich toolset. I particularly enjoyed exploring new creative paths with Maya nCloth. Our team used it to simulate everything from Dan's viscous body to breaking glass and all kinds of fabrics." Maya nCloth is part of the Maya Nucleus simulation framework that helps artists quickly direct and control cloth and other material simulations.

"The Spine" was produced by the National Film Board of Canada in association with Copperheart Animation and C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures, with the creative participation of Autodesk and Seneca College School of Communication Arts. Digital artists and engineers from Autodesk collaborated with Landreth to ensure successful completion of the project. Fifteen Seneca College students worked on the film for four months, as part of their graduation project.

"I worked with Seneca College students on 'Ryan' and was excited to collaborate with the institution again," said Landreth. "It was great to work with such a talented team of students. For some of them, 'The Spine' was their first real-world project. They were up and running within a week. Thanks to their talent and Maya software's power and speed, we were always ahead of the production schedule."

"The Spine" debuted at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival (June 8-13) in Annecy, France, and premiered at the Worldwide Short Film Festival (June 16-21) in Toronto, Canada. It won a "Best of Fest" award at the Melbourne International Animation Festival (June 22-28). Landreth is currently working on his first full-length feature film, called "Lovecraft," and expects to once again make movie magic with Maya.

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.

About Filmmaker Chris Landreth

Chris Landreth was born in the United States and earned his MS in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois in 1986. He gained international recognition with his first short films, "The End" (released in 1995 and nominated for an Oscar) and "Bingo" (Best Animated short at the 1998 Genie Awards). His reputation only grew with the release of his next film, "Ryan" (2004), which won more than 50 awards, including an Oscar. With "The Spine" (2009), Landreth continues his explorations in the use of unique imagery to represent human psychological turmoil. He is currently working with producer Steve Hoban on his first animated feature film, "Lovecraft."

About the National Film Board of Canada

The world changes, our stories live on - that's the National Film Board of Canada's pledge to Canadians as it marks its 70th anniversary in 2009 with a new national online Screening Room and a slate of bold, innovative productions. Canada's public film producer and distributor, the NFB produces and distributes auteur animation, social-issue documentaries, alternative drama and digital content that provide the world with a unique Canadian perspective. In collaboration with its international partners and co-producers, the NFB is expanding the vocabulary of 21st century cinema and breaking new ground in form and content, through community filmmaking projects, cross-platform media, interactive cinema, stereoscopic animation - and more. Since the NFB's founding in 1939, it has created over 13,000 productions and won over 5,000 awards, including 12 Oscars and more than 90 Genies. To watch over 1000 productions online or for more information, visit NFB.ca.

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