14 Academy Award-Nominated Movies: One Thing in Common

February 16, 2012

Digital Artists Worldwide Used Autodesk Digital Entertainment Creation Software to Create 2011's Most Celebrated Movies

SAN RAFAEL, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 16, 2012-- Digital artists devoted days and years behind the scenes to help create the movie magic seen in many of this year's Academy Award-nominated films. In the categories for Best Visual Effects and Best Animated Film (Feature and Short) in particular, many artists relied on the same set of tools —Digital Entertainment Creation (DEC) software from Autodesk, Inc. (NASDAQ: ADSK).

"Great films depend on great storytelling and our technology is designed to enable artistic vision," said Marc Petit, senior vice president, Autodesk Media & Entertainment. "We congratulate the multitalented teams of artists from North America, New Zealand, Europe and Asia, and we are proud of Autodesk software's role in helping them create these extraordinary movies."

Best Visual Effects

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2" —UK-based visual effects (VFX) studios Double Negative, MPC and Framestore each used Autodesk Maya 3D animation and rendering software to help create the visually extravagant effects for this final installment in the Harry Potter franchise. Double Negative VFX Supervisor David Vickery said, "Maya has been the lynchpin of our pipeline since 'Goblet of Fire.' For this film, Maya helped us build a fully computer-generated (CG) Hogwarts in a massive 3D environment, including a spectacular mountain range and an animated fire-breathing dragon digitally modeled with Autodesk Mudbox software." MPC VFX Supervisor Greg Butler added, "From the first film in the 'Potter' series through to this film's final shot, MPC has relied on Maya for modeling, rigging and lighting." Andy Kind, Framestore VFX supervisor said, "Autodesk's Maya once again was our go-to tool, enabling us to bring to life the magic of the Chamber of Secrets for Ron and Hermione's first kiss, as well as Harry's vision of Heaven. We couldn't have done any of the eight films without it!"

"Hugo" — VFX studio Pixomondo managed a global production team across 10 of its 11 facilities in North America, Europe and Asia for this richly detailed reimagining of 1930s Paris. The worldwide team worked for over a year using a production pipeline comprised of Maya and Autodesk 3ds Max for animation, rendering, character rigging and modeling; as well as Autodesk MotionBuilder for motion capture and animation. VFX Supervisor Ben Grossmann said, "The interoperability of Autodesk tools helped us meet tight deadlines and bring Martin Scorsese's magical vision to the big screen."

"Real Steel" — Visual effects powerhouse Digital Domain, motion-capture specialists Giant Studios and virtual production innovators Technoprops delivered "Real Steel" within an impressively efficient 71-day production schedule. The close collaboration between the three companies and an Autodesk toolset helped create this realistic and thrilling action movie with a believable and captivating robot and human relationship. VFX Supervisor Erik Nash said, "The on-set real-time interoperability of Maya and MotionBuilder enabled tremendous creative freedom for the entire production team."

"Rise of the Planet of the Apes" —Caesar, the CG chimpanzee performed by Andy Serkis is a creative milestone for Weta Digital in New Zealand. Weta used Maya and MotionBuilder as the core of its creative production pipelines for its groundbreaking visual effects and performance capture. Sebastian Sylwan, chief technology officer at Weta said, "Creating a believable and realistic CG character like Caesar required providing our artists with the right tools and innovative technology that allowed them to iterate and express their creativity. We developed our own software to perfect performance capture, hair, eyes and muscles amongst others, using Maya and MotionBuilder as a backbone." Canada-based Image Engine contributed previsualization for the film and also took advantage of a Maya-based pipeline.

"Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon" —The extraordinarily detailed Transformer robots contain up to 50,000 million polygons rendered in stereoscopic 3D by lead visual effects houses Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) with studios in San Francisco and Singapore and Digital Domain. ILM used the following Autodesk DEC software tools in its pipeline: 3ds Max for digital environment work; Autodesk Flame as part of its proprietary SABRE high-speed compositing system; and Maya as the core tool for animation, rigging and layout. Scott Farrar, visual effects supervisor on 'Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon' said, "As effects work continues to grow in complexity, it is more important than ever that our artists have access to best of breed tools and by using Autodesk's Digital Entertainment Creation software, ILM is able to continue to create groundbreaking visual effects."

Best Animated Feature Film

"Kung Fu Panda 2" and **"Puss in Boots"** —Both movies earned not only Academy Award nominations for Animated Feature Film for Dreamworks Animation (DWA), but also were two of the top three grossing animated films of 2011.* DWA continues to creatively push technology to imbue animated characters with huge personalities, and both films used Maya. Phil McNally, stereoscopic supervisor on both movies said, "Either on our own or in concert with Autodesk, we can develop tools in Maya to specifically address the challenges of stereoscopic 3D. Maya gives us that intuitive flexibility, or the ability to see what we're doing — while we're doing it — in 3D."

"Rango"

"Rango," the story of a weird lizard's quest for identity, was ILM's first animated feature. The film presented some daunting creative and technical challenges: Rango's face alone required over 300 controllers to achieve the range of performance needed for the 1,100 shots he appears in. On top of which, Rango was just one of well over 100 characters that populated the film. "All of these characters had some combination of scales, feathers, or fur and all had clothing. We strove to create a very tactile world for Rango," said ILM's Hal Hickel, animator director on the film. "We wanted to create the illusion that if you could reach out and touch objects in the frame you'd know exactly what they would feel like, so it was very important that our software enable us to show as much detail as possible at each phase of the process. This allowed us to make certain the performances would translate to the big screen. Maya was great at letting us do that."

Other Categories

- "**The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore**" —*nominated for Short Film (animated)* — Moonbot Studios in

Louisiana used Maya to help create this poignant and humorous allegorical film.

- "**The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo**" — *nominated for five awards* — Digital Domain created digital doubles, matte paintings, animation and set extensions using both Maya and 3ds Max. Method Studios contributed to 101 VFX shots, including a fully CG train sequence through a snow-covered landscape using Maya, Flame and Autodesk Flare software. Blur Studios created the amazing title sequence using a combination of 3ds Max for animation and Autodesk Softimage for keyframing.
- "**La Luna**" — *nominated for Short Film (animated*) — Pixar used Maya and Pixar's own Renderman to create this mystical coming-of-age story.
- "**The Muppets**" — *nominated for Original Song* — LOOK Effects used a combination of Flame, Flare and Maya to help bring these beloved characters to life in this box-office hit.
- "**The Tree of Life**" — *nominated for three awards including Best Picture* — Method Studios used Maya to help create the fully CG 4K (4096 × 3112 pixels per frame) sequence for the film's "Microbial" section, which plays effectively alongside practical and mixed-technique approaches. Method's EVP Dan Glass was also the film's overall senior visual effects supervisor. Prime Focus used Maya, 3ds Max and Mudbox to create the wonderfully realistic dinosaur sequences, dedicating a team of 50 artists to achieving Terrence Malick's vision for these scenes.
- "**War Horse**" — *nominated for six awards including Best Picture* — UK-based Framestore used Maya to help create the equine digital double, barbwire VFX integration, digital environments and clean-up on 200 shots for Steven Spielberg's epic drama. Hollywood and London-based The Third Floor also previsualized key sequences using a toolset that includes Maya.

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc., is a leader in 3D design, engineering and entertainment software. Customers across the manufacturing, architecture, building, construction, and media and entertainment industries — including the last 16 Academy Award winners for Best Visual Effects — use Autodesk software to design, visualize and simulate their ideas. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk continues to develop the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art software for global markets. For additional information about Autodesk, visit www.autodesk.com.

** Source: Box Office Mojo*

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Source: Autodesk, Inc.

Autodesk, Inc.
Rama Dunayevich, 415-547-2472
rama.dunayevich@autodesk.com
or
Karen Raz, 310-450-1482
karen@razpr.com