Creating Photoreal Creatures that Audiences Can Connect With

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ABSTRACT

This Production Talk will explore the culture shift in advertising, particularly how consumer expectations for quality content has never been higher than it is today. It will explore the use of photoreal characters and creatures to allow brands to break through the noise and connect with audiences. Michael Gregory (Creative Director) and Dan Seddon (VFX supervisor) will take audiences though the key steps that need to be taken to achieve a photoreal creature, as well as considerations that need to be made when finalizing the look of the creature. Examples of Moving Picture Company's (MPC) creature and character work will be used, as well as an exploration into the proprietary tools developed and used by MPC in their creative process.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Computing methodologies** → **Computer graphics**; **Animation**.

KEYWORDS

Creature creation, photoreal creatures, CGI creatures

1 INTRODUCTION

Consumer expectation for quality has never been higher than it is today, with audiences choosing when, where, and how they want their content, whether it is professionally crafted or user generated. With this culture shift to a more active audience, how do brands break through all of the noise and stand out in the crowd?

Creatures and characters play a central role in today's advertising - even within the short confines of a commercial, our hearts and minds can be stolen. But what is it about characters that really

sway our decision-making process and our brand connection, like Volkswagen's confident ram, "Bam," which led the VW T-Roc to become the most test-driven model in the automaker's range. [Auto Express 2018] MPC will delve into the creation of some of their most successful character creations and the all-important steps to achieving photorealism.

2   TAKEAWAYS

(1) An understanding, through distinct projects examples, of the deep research that goes into creating a character, from the research stage through to the creation and execution.
(2) An exploration into the proprietary tools used to achieve all aspects of a photoreal creature.

3   METHODS

We will be taking a deep look into some of MPC's greatest creature work, delving into the hard work and patience that goes into every emotion and expression that makes these characters seem so lifelike that audiences wouldn't know that they are CG. MPC will share insight into the many levels of consideration, not only for the design of the creatures, but for the process of approaching the entire production and the extensive research behind a character's every move. From the beginning of the process (previs, storyboards), to the research stage (movement, expressions, fur) all the way through to the execution of the creature within the campaign.

4   CONCLUSIONS

MPC will demonstrate that creatures and characters are key in helping brands connect with their audiences, whereas photoreal creatures that don't quite hit the mark could have a detrimental effect on the audience. They will show that having the right tools and skilled artists are essential in achieving this photorealism.

5   SPEAKER PROFILES

Michael Gregory, Creative Director. Michael is a Creative Director at MPC's LA studio. He brings to this role an exemplary aesthetic sensibility, expertise on leading teams through large-scale projects, not to mention long-standing relationships with the top directors in the industry.

His impressive portfolio of work includes some of the industry's most acclaimed commercials, including the double Cannes Gold Lion winning and triple VES winning Samsung "Do What You Can't" spot directed by Matthijs Van Heijningen, which features an optimistic Ostrich that learns how to do the impossible: fly.

Well-versed in public speaking, Michael has appeared on many panels, most recently at GNOMON's School of Visual Effects, where he presented MPC's creature and character work to an audience of aspiring VFX artists.

Dan Seddon, VFX Supervisor. Dan Seddon is a VFX Supervisor with over 20 years of experience in both feature films and commercials, who has lead creative teams on some of the biggest films and advertising campaigns in the industry.

Dan's commercial background has earned him a number of accolades throughout his career, with 17 awards in craft categories for projects including Smirnoff "Sea" and Monster.com "Stork," where

the creature setups he developed also won a number of awards. He has also won a BAFTA for Best Graphic Design on the BBC show "The Human Body."

With a master's degree in computer graphics, his strong technical background has seen him write award-winning software and publications, which have featured at the SIGGRAPH conference and in films such as "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides."

REFERENCES

Auto Express 2018.   Volkswagen's "Born Confident" advert for the new T-Roc has won the 2018 integrated advertising campaign award. https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/volkswagen/troc/103948/car-advertising-campaign-of-the-year-2018-volkswagen-t-roc. Accessed: 2019-05-01.