ANIMATION CLUB

Welcome to the second issue of the animation club's newsletter. Since the last newsletter, I believe the club has a clearer idea on what its goals should be. Its seems the majority of club members are interested in three main projects:

1. Project 1 is a CD-ROM featuring animation done by our group.

2. Project 2 is a movie incorporating live action with 3D animation.

3. Project 3 is the creation of a flash presentation page on the 2D section of our website.

I think that these projects will showcase the diverse talents within our club.

Have a happy holiday.

The Next Club meeting is Tuesday, December 18, at 6:00pm in the Multimedia Lab
Changes will be announced.
I am in the process of trying to arrange guest speakers.

I would also like to have members demonstrate programs they are familiar with. Our members have diverse interests and talents which could be put to good use at each meeting.
Is anyone interested in seeing a movie at the last meeting of the year? If so let me know before the next meeting. Maybe we use the club budget to pay for the tickets
- Andrew Kear

REVIEWS

MUMMY RETURNS (2001)

Can a film have too many special effects? This was the question I asked myself while viewing the Mummy Returns. This film resembles more of a rollercoaster ride than a drama. Curiously, "The Rock" is the marquee star yet he appears only in the beginning of the film and at the end as a CGI scorpion creature. "The Rock" is probably the perfect type of actor for this type of film where his physique is perfectly suited for the numerous action scenes. If you are expecting an atmospheric mummy tale in the old Hammer studio tradition then you will be disappointed. What made those old Hammer film so good was that they relied more on mode and atmosphere rather than endless action scenes. In many respects the special effects in Mummy Returns look too slick for their own good. Some of the effects look too present-day to be believable in their supposed time period. It seems to me CGI effects look more convincing when they are being utilized in a future setting. Still that is not to say the effects lack imagination. There are some impressive battle scenes involving dog-like creatures and a pretty interesting scorpion creature at the end that appears to be "The Rock"! Overall the film is a good diversion, but it could of been so much better with a little more atmosphere.

- Andrew Kear

DUMBLAND (2001)

Bombarded with the egregious torrents on non-stop refuse posing as contemporary cartoons, I have decided to redirect what little energy I have left in cartoons towards the web. Now with the demise of Romp.com, a controversial website who graced us with playboy classic ephemera such as *Booty Call*, *Bill and Ted* and *Tardz*, Atom Films seems to have established itself as Romp's heir apparent with the recent installment of a David Lynch saga that goes by the name of *Dumbland*. Yes, I have articulated correctly. David Lynch, the avant garde specialist behind *Eraserhead*, *Elephant Man*, and *Blue Velvet* has now dabbled into animation, however, with a seriously disturbed minimalist approach. Belying his classically trained painting skills, Lynch had a paradigm shift from genius to the realm of absolute dumbness. The drawings look as though they had been done by a retarded child with absolutely no concept of aesthetics, period. The animation is no different, just taking vir-

tual scribbles to another level of dumb-ness. It follows the misadventures of a badly drawn aggressive but simple hick who has an open maw for a mouth that slobbers in a crudely-animated manner every time he utters anything. From flipping off CIA helicopters that come and go out of nowhere to punching out a salesman whose head is left dangling on his back, *Dumbland* is sure to wreak (or reek) unadulterated nihilism without regard to intellectualism or negotiation and spits in the face of conceit and sac-charine felicity. That's why I love it! This is the type of show that should not be analyzed, philosophized or taken as a double-ententre for some subliminal plot the creator toys the minds of his audience with. *Dumbland* is total straightforward dumb fun for the reality nihilists that we all have to sometimes become when burdened with cinematic pretension and artistry society doesn't think we'll ever reach no matter how hard we try.

- Richard Gaines
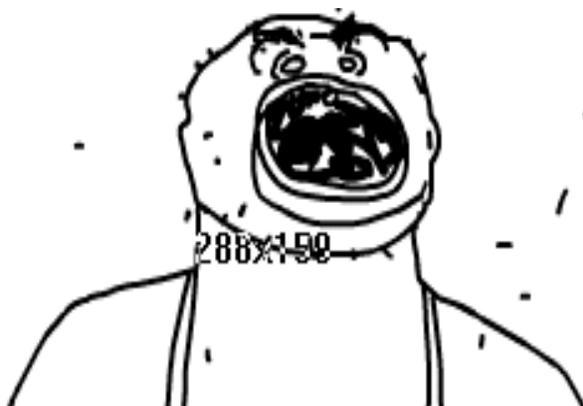
POSER

Last time I discussed Bryce 3D, which like Poser used to belong to the now defunct Metacreations. Fortunately, when Metacreations decided to divest their graphics software in favor of an e-commerce strategy both these fine pro-grams found other homes. Poser has found a home with its original creators at Curious Labs. Like all past Metacreation software, Poser favors a visual interface over pull down menus and windows. Figures are manipulated using dials that look similar to ones seen in Bryce. There are also choices for dif-ferent human templates that include skeletons and puppets. These figures can be animated using a simple time line. Backgrounds can easily be im-ported into Bryce. A background can even be imported as an AVI file. This allows you to incorporate live action with your Poser figures. I wish Bryce had this ability to import moving back-grounds.

When I think about it both Bryce and Poser would make an excellent com-bined package. Imagine the advan-tages of a program that contained the best elements of both Bryce and Poser.

-Andrew Kear

SNIPPETS

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http://www.raritanval.edu/StudentActivities/Animation/mainpage/
animationintro.html

CGI animation seems to be at its best when it comes to creating cartoon fantasy worlds. A perfect example of this is Monsters Inc, which creates convincing animated characters. Unlike the lifeless realistic figures in Final Fantasy the Characters in Monsters Inc have genuine personalities. So far the most successful CGI films seem to be based on fantasy character not simulated humans.

As of last week Romp.com is down due to server changes. Of course what this really means is the site is going away for good. So I guess this is a good time to say good-bye to the various Romp cartoons such as, Booty Call, Tardzs, and of coarse we will miss that fat coke addicted con-man Bill Blickman. I will miss Romp. It meant so much to our lives.

I suggest we spend our budget next semester on a decent digital camera. This will allow us to make our own films in-house

Submissions:
If you want to contribute artwork for the club contact Andrew Kear at the one of the club meetings or simply e-mail your work to this address: akear@rcn.com

Site of the Month.
www.Campchaos..com
Not as funny as Romp, but there is some good flash animation. It is just the whole site seems uneven in quality.

IN PRODUCTION

The animation club will release a CD-ROM this spring that contains the best of the clubs animation. Accompanying music will be done in-house. I have already made a start on this project. What I need now is some submissions. This project could be a good recruiting tool for the multimedia department.

Richard and I have been working on how to combine Poser animation with live action video. So far the preliminary movies look quite convincing. We may even produced a longer film this coming year. I will demonstrate how Poser 3D figures can be incorporated into video at a upcoming meeting.

The Performing Artist Club site is at this address, http://www.raritanval.edu/newhometest/frameset/studentservices.html. However, the site is still not really finished. We need to add an activity page.

The continued construction of the website is still a priority. The 2D section is going to be developed into a Flash cartoon site. I believe this site will take quite a bit of work. The video site is up featuring a few examples. If you want to view some of the films here is the site address, http://www.raritanval.edu/StudentActivities/Animation/movies/index.html. Warning you will need a fast connection speed (Cable or DSL recommended).