Press Release #9: Digital Humans, Commercials, and more confirmations

For immediate publication

FMX 2018
Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Immersive Media
April 24-27, Stuttgart/Germany, Haus der Wirtschaft

Ludwigsburg/Germany, April 18, 2018. Preparations at the FMX venue are in full swing. With 270 FMX events lining ahead, the team is all set for four fabulous days dedicated to animation, effects, games and immersive media. Still there are plenty of highlights which can be announced – among them the tracks Digital Humans, Commercials, Location-Based Entertainment and the special Valentine’s Day screening of Early Man (introduced by David Sproxton), and presentations on the sound in The Shape of Water, on the creation of Rachael in Blade Runner 2049, and on the app Tunnel AR, the world’s first interactive augmented reality music video.

► Effects – Commercials, Digital Humans, Virtual Production, and more VFX Case Studies

With their short run time and production period, commercials pose an almost impossible problem: tell a story, and make it look as good as any big-screen image, at a fraction of the time. The Commercials track brings together projects that have risen to the occasion and present impossible images brilliantly and believably. Alex Hammond (The Mill) will talk about the follow-up to O2’s Follow The Rabbit campaign. Anthony Bloor, Head of 3D at MPC London, will present a behind the scenes look at the creation of the lonely robot for Edeka Christmas 2117 and a confident little ram for VW Born Confident. David Anastacio, Prof. Juri Stanossek, Dominic André Bitu and Gus Martinez (all Mackevision) will give an insight into the production process of the Porsche Mission E film for the global launch communication.

Digital Humans are the most complex and interesting problem facing computer graphics artists and technicians alike. The Digital Humans track will explore the very best of both cinematic and real time virtual humans. JP Lewis (SEED) will discuss the challenges of creating truly believable and photoreal characters. The making of the MEETMIKE avatar will be the topic of a presentation given by Mike Seymour (Xguide) and Jay Busch (Google). MPC Asset Supervisor Axel Akeson will give a behind the scenes look at how his team crossed the uncanny valley and created the photoreal human Rachael for Blade Runner 2049. Ian Comley (Industrial Light & Magic) will outline the past, present and future of digital humans at ILM. Steve Cauklin’s (Cubic Motion) presentation will show how the real-time characters Senua, Siren and Neetmike were created and how the motion capture and solving technology has improved over the course of each project.

The VFX Case Studies track will be rounded off by some more confirmations. Tim Caplan (Union) will explain how Union worked collaboratively with director Martin McDonagh to provide effects that accentuate story points and character traits in Oscar-winning Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri. The animation and VFX behind Peter Rabbit will be presented in a talk by Will Reichelt (Animal Logic). Frederik Lillelund (Double Negative), Eric Noel (Framestore), Gerd Nefzer and Carsten Woithe (both Neftz Special Effects) will focus on the creative and technical challenges behind the work on Blade Runner 2049.

The Virtual Production track returns to FMX for the seventh year in a row, chronicling the ongoing use of real time computer graphics in the making of linear media. Its curator David Morin (Joint Technology Committee on Virtual Production) will discuss the actual state of virtual production. Prof. Volker Helze and Simon Spielmann (both Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg) will cover virtual production tools developed at Filmakademie, tracing the evolution from 2007 to the latest open-source development VPET (Virtual Production Editing Tools). Daniel Gregoire (founder of Halon Entertainment) will present tools for the next generation of storytelling. Shannon Justison (The Third Floor) will share insights into the visualization and virtual production for Thor: Ragnarok. Chris Harvey (Oats Studios) and Mathieu Muller (Unity) will guide the visitors behind the scenes of the making of the ADAM episodes 2 & 3, which were produced using a real-time engine. Habib Zargarpour (Digital Monarch Media) will talk about the history and origin of DMM’S real-time tools and how their use evolved through The Jungle Book, Ready Player One and Blade Runner 2049, being currently deployed on Tom Hank’s film Greyhound.

► Art – Concept Art and Sound Design

Two newly added speakers complete the Concept Art track. Kristen Anderson worked on several Lego movies and is currently art directing the Lego Movie 2. She will share her experiences and insights working on large feature film projects and examine set design and its relationship with world building. Concept Artist and Art Director Jama Jurabaev will discuss VR as an intuitive tool for artists. Both will be joining the Panel Discussion, together with William Joyce (Moonbot Studios) and Lynne Naylor (DreamWorks TV Animation).

The Sound Design track is complemented by a talk by sound designer Nathan Robitaille on how sound connects characters with each other and with the audience in The Shape of Water, and a talk by Benedict Caleo Green (Ecco VR) covering the background, location recording and post production workflow involved in the creation of Hallelujah.

 ► Animation – The Art of Animation and From Indie to IP

The contents of the The Art of Animation track are now fixed as well. Lisa Allen and Scott Carroll (both Blue Sky) will talk about creating dynamic character relationships for the movie Ferdinand. Directors Jakob Schuh, Jan Lachauer and Bin-Han To (all alumni of Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg) will give an insight into the making of the Oscar-nominated Roald Dahl adaptation Revolting Rhymes. Visual Development Artist Manu Arenas and Visual Effects Supervisor Kyle Odermatt (both Walt Disney Animation Studios) will share their approach and philosophy to creating believable worlds – from early concept design to final vibrant picture – at Walt Disney Animation Studios. Early Man is the latest stop motion film from Aardman Animations, and will be presented in a talk by Tom Barnes, Head of Camera and Post Production. The film itself will be screened at FMX 2018 as well, introduced by Aardman Animations co-founder David Sproxton and in cooperation with Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film. Three leading directors in animation, Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), David Silverman (The Simpsons) and Shannon
Tindle (Sony Pictures Animation), will break down in a joint discussion what it takes to direct an animated project. Greg Jowle (Animal Logic) will explore the technical challenges faced on The LEGO Ninjago Movie from a technical and production management perspective.

The latest confirmations for the From Indie to IP track are Philip Hunt who will describe his career at STUDIO AKA, being the studio’s co-founder, partner & creative director, as well as Ivan Beres and Ivan Knezevic (both Epix) who will present Dimitri & Kim, an animated series about two Eastern European boys surviving everyday boredom by going on imaginary quests.

▶ Immersive Media – Location-Based Entertainment and AR Platforms

By putting visitors in immersive physical environments, the projects highlighted in the Location-Based Entertainment track elevate their already breathtaking images. Combining cutting-edge projection and theme park ride technology with storytelling, they achieve a level of "being there" that makes the most fantastical experiences look, sound, and feel real. Mark LaVine (Disney Imagineering) will talk about the development of the immersive ride Avatar – Flight of Passage at Disney’s Animal Kingdom theme park. Curtis Hickman’s (The Void) and Ben Snow’s (Industrial Light & Magic) presentation will uncover the secrets of Star Wars: Secrets of the Empire and its blending of cinematic, location-based and real-time entertainment to create a uniquely new kind of immersive experience. Ernest Yale (Triotech) will give the overall context of why media-based technologies are taking over out of home attractions, using NINJAGO, LEGO’s strongest brand, as a specific case study.

The AR Platforms track will be rounded off by presentations on Microsoft HoloLens for film and game production by Amit Rojtbiat and Martin Wettig (both Microsoft), and on Tunnel AR, the world’s first interactive augmented reality music video made for Germany’s most popular hip-hop band Die Fantastischen Vier, given by Julian Weiss and Fabian Frick (both headraft).

▶ Technology – HPC & Visual Creativity

The HPC & Visual Creativity track will discuss how artificial intelligence can enhance decision making, or be augmented in modern world using augmented reality, and how to design effective high-performance visualisation systems. Moreover, a vast amount of use cases will be presented. A/Prof. Tomasz Bednarz (EPICentre / Data61) and Sarah Kenderdine (eM+) will elaborate on expanded perception and interaction through connecting graphics with compute. Prof. Emeritus Arthur Ira Miller (UCL) will ask the question if artificial intelligence can be the creator of new forms of art and music. Immersive technologies in media art, including dome, panorama and stage projections, as well as VR and AR works for current HMDs and mobile devices, will be the topic of Bernd Lintermann (ZKM).

▶ Animation Production Day 2018 – APD Conference

The Animation Production Day (APD, April 26/27, 2018) is a business platform for the international animation industry, hosted by FMX 2018 and ITFS 2018. On April 26, visitors are invited to join the APD Conference at the L-Bank Rotunde. The first part of the conference will focus on challenges in the development of new content. Among others, speakers will be screenwriter Eric Shaw who will talk about modernizing Muppet Babies, and writer Karina Schaapman who will present the establishment of a 360° brand with reference to Mouse Mansion. The second part is opening with a keynote speech from Peter Robinson (Dubit) with facts and figures on the use of Video on Demand (VoD) and traditional TV by children and young adults. Then Miki Chojnacka (Hopster), Michael Stumpf (ZDF), Luca Milano (RAI Ragazzi) and Steffen Kottkamp (Viacom) will introduce their programming strategies. The APD Conference is open to all FMX visitors. More information here

▶ Masterclasses – Acting for Animators, Storytelling and Sound Design

This year’s FMX program shines with a couple of hands-on Masterclasses. Craig Caldwell (University of Utah) will give a masterclass on storytelling, and acting instructor and author Ed Hooks on acting for animators. Benedict Caleo Green (Ecco VR) will guide his “students” through the process of bringing linear VR visuals to life with fully spatialised sound. In the masterclass on creature sound design, Paula Fairfield (Eargasm Inc.) will share her design thoughts and experiences on film and TV series creatures she has worked on including Predators and The River.

▶ Behind the Beard | All Trailers

Binge watching with Bruno the Beaver – see the complete Behind the Beard trailer series here.

Learn more about Behind the Beard here.

▶ Press contact

press@fmx.de

Nora Hieronymus
Public Relations & Press
+49 (0)7141 969828-70

Franziska Ullrich
Public Relations & Social Media
+49 (0)7141 969828-76

For interview requests please contact
Nicola Steller
Conference Press Coordinator
+49 (0) 7156-350616

▶ Press Accreditation

You can apply for a Press Accreditation via press@fmx.de.
Press Downloads
At www.fmx.de journalists can download the FMX 2018 logo as well as the FMX CI Guidelines.

Editor's Notes:
FMX is funded by the Ministry of Science, Research and Arts and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing of the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg, the City of Stuttgart and the MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, taking place in cooperation with VES Visual Effects Society, ACM SIGGRAPH and the World Building Institute, supported by the Animation Media Cluster Region Stuttgart (AMCRS), Backstage, Foundry, Isotropix, Mackevision and ScanlineVFX. FMX is an event by the Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg, organized by Animationsinstitut, hosting the Animation Production Day (APD), a joint venture with the Festival of Animated Film Stuttgart (ITFS).

Further information at www.fmx.de