

VanArts at Vancouver ACM SIGGRAPH SPARK FX Festival 2009

SPARK FX 09

10 Films, 18 Speaking Events, 6 Days, 1 Fantastic Festival

January 21 – January 26, 2009

<http://siggraph.ca/events/archive/2009/01/SPKFX09TMP.php>

VanArts had an impressive presence at this year's premier Vancouver Visual Effects festival, now in its 2nd year, and the festival had an equally impressive impact on VanArts.

VanArts faculty members Ken Priebe, Admissions Director, and Doug Smith, VFX Department Head, (bios below,) were heavily involved in the organizing and managing of SPARK '09 as members of the various committees that were responsible for creating the event, and the school itself was the sole academic sponsor in the show.

VanArts students were by far the largest single organization represented in the ranks of volunteers, with VFX 10 students Belinda Fung, Erwin Dumoulin and Blair Richmond doing everything from hanging banners to tearing tickets. VanArts VFX Department TA Max Schroeder helped Ken Priebe staff the newly redesigned VanArts booth in the theatre lobby, assisting throngs of potential students, as well as coordinating most of the VanArts contributions to the event.

VanArts faculty were also roaming the stage as well, as Compositing Supervisor Mike Adkisson, (bio below,) and VFX Department Head Doug Smith sat on the panel sessions "VFX in Vancouver" and "Pipedreams: In Search of the Perfect Production Solution," respectively, and Admissions Director and stop-motion animation expert Ken Priebe introduced the film "The 7th Voyage of Sinbad."

Best of all, on Sunday, January 26th, we were able to host 6 of the biggest names in the VFX industry, Mark Coleran, Paul Debevec, Harrison Ellenshaw, Marshall Krasser, Shane Mahan and Gordon Smith, (bios below,) for a fantastic Q&A session and hands-on discussion at the school, where this amazing collection of talent went over our students' VFX projects with them, and where everyone was having such a good time that the speakers had to literally be dragged away from the students when it was time for them to catch their flights out of town.

And we're doing it again, as VanArts continues to strengthen our commitment to Vancouver ACM SIGGRAPH and the VFX community in Vancouver and worldwide, with our support of the upcoming SPARK Animation Festival in September 2009 and, of course as a proud partner

with Vancouver ACM SIGGRAPH for SPARK FX Festival 2010 in Vancouver's Olympics year.

VANARTS FACULTY BIOS:

Ken A. Priebe
Instructor / VanArts
Author of The Art of Stop-Motion Animation

Ken Priebe earned a BFA from the University of Michigan School of Art & Design, majoring in film & animation. He has worked as a 2D animator for several children's games and short films for Thunderbean Animation and Bigfott Studios. Ken has developed curriculum and taught stop-motion animation at Vancouver Institute of Media Arts (VanArts) and for the Academy of Art University Cybercampus. He is also an independent filmmaker, writer, puppeteer, animation history fanatic and author of the book The Art of Stop-Motion Animation.

Michael Adkisson
Lead Compositor / MPC
(Æon Flux, Outlander, Mars Attacks!...)

Michael began his visual effects career in 1995 at Warner Digital, moving on to Digital Domain, Digital Dimension and Pixel Magic in Los Angeles, and then Spin VFX, Rainmaker Digital and MPC in Vancouver; his career has spanned everything from traditional opticals to full CG visual effects compositing and film chain supervision, in formats from 16mm to IMAX. Since joining MPC in March 2008, he has composited on Watchmen and is currently working on Surrogates. His past credits include such films as Mars Attacks!, My Super Ex-Girlfriend, The Last Samurai, Æon Flux, and Kinsey.

Doug Smith
Visual Effects Department Head / VanArts
(Exorcist:The Beginning, Outlander...)

Doug Smith has over 20 years experience in digital production and visual effects supervision for film, TV and multimedia, ranging from 3D character animation and pipeline design to compositing, large-format film and academics. Using the first PC-based 3D animation system, he worked on the first digital photo-real Star Trek ships, the first motion capture in a commercial and the first digital IMAX composites. His more recent work includes CG supervision and pipeline design on the Exorcist: The Beginning and Outlander films and the Tomb Raider VII game, as well as projects with M&M/Mars, Franchise Pictures, Fox Television and Saban, and staff positions with Dreamquest Images, Disney, Modern VideoFilm

and BOSS Film Studios, where he co-chaired the Character Animation Research Group. His academic credentials include a stint as Visual Effects Supervisor at Vancouver Film School and his current position as Visual Effects Department Head at the Vancouver Institute of Media Arts (VanArts). By staying awake 24 hours a day, he also finds time to do software development, technical writing, industrial design and new media work with clients like Panoram Tech, Zoic, Egg Inc., Cryoport Systems, Coriolis Press, Adobe Systems and RE:Vision. Doug is a member of SIGGRAPH, SMPTE, and the Visual Effects Society (VES).

SPEAKER BIOS:

Mark Coleran

Visual Designer / GridIron Software

(Children of Men, The Island, The Bourne Identity...)

Mark Coleran is a visual designer working in film & television. Having originally come from a print background as a Graphic Designer, Mark has been designing and producing motion graphics for the film and television industries for the past 10 years. His clients and jobs have been as diverse as the BBC to Cartoon Network, creating titles and network identities, to the creation of computer screen graphics for feature films such as The Bourne Ultimatum, Déjà Vu, The Island, Children of Men and Mission Impossible 3 amongst others. Mark is currently working with GridIron Software in Canada, creating interfaces for a new generation of creative tools.

Paul Debevec

Associate Director of Graphics Research / Institute for Creative Technology, USC

(Peter Jackson's King Kong, Spider-Man II & III, Superman Returns...)

Paul Debevec is a research associate professor at the University of Southern California and the associate director of graphics research at USC's Institute for Creative Technologies. Debevec's Ph.D. thesis (UC Berkeley, 1996) presented Façade, an image-based modeling and rendering system for creating photoreal architectural models from photographs. Using Façade he led the creation of virtual cinematography of the Berkeley campus for his 1997 film The Campanile Movie whose techniques were used to create virtual backgrounds in the 1999 film The Matrix. Subsequently, Debevec developed techniques for illuminating computer-generated scenes with real-world lighting captured through high dynamic range photography, demonstrating new image-based lighting techniques in his films Rendering with Natural Light (1998), Fiat Lux (1999), and The Parthenon (2004); he also led the design of HDR Shop, the first widely-used high dynamic range image editing program.

At USC ICT, Debevec has led the development of a series of Light Stage devices for capturing and simulating how objects and people reflect light, recently used to create realistic digital actors in films such as Spider-Man 2 and Superman Returns. He is the recipient of ACM SIGGRAPH's first Significant New Researcher Award and a co-author of the 2005 book High Dynamic Range Imaging from Morgan Kaufmann.

Harrison Ellenshaw
VFX Artist & Designer
(Star Wars, TRON, Dick Tracy...)

Harrison Ellenshaw has spent over 30 years in visual effects and film, working on such films as Star Wars, The Black Hole, The Empire Strikes Back, Superman IV, Dick Tracy and most notably, Tron. He first started in the business as a matte artist at Walt Disney Studios, then joined George Lucas' premier effects facility, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), creating a number of matte paintings for Star Wars, and overseeing the matte department on The Empire Strikes Back. Later, upon his return to Disney in 1989 for Dick Tracy, Harrison headed Disney Studios' own highly regarded effects facility: Buena Vista Visual Effects (BVVE). Harrison has been nominated for an Academy Award® along with his father, Peter Ellenshaw, for special visual effects work on The Black Hole. He is also member of AMPAS, BAFTA and is a founding director of the VES.

Marshall Krasser
Associate Visual Effects Supervisor / ILM
(War of the Worlds, Titanic, Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back...)
2 Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards

Marshall Krasser is a graduate of Southwest Missouri State University, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with an emphasis in graphic design. In 1994, he joined Industrial Light & Magic as a digital roscoper on Casper. Since then, he transitioned into the roles of Digital Compositor (on such films as Mission Impossible, Twister, Titanic, and Snake Eyes), Lead Digital Compositor (Small Soldiers, The Mummy), and Compositing Supervisor (on such films as Pearl Harbor, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, The Hulk, War of the Worlds, Lady in the Water, and Evan Almighty). He shares two Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards, "Best Single Visual Effects of the Year" and "Outstanding Compositing in a Motion Picture", for his work on War of the Worlds (2005). Most recently, he was Associate Visual Effects Supervisor on Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.

Shane Mahan
Effects Supervisor / Legacy Effects

(Iron Man, Big Fish, Terminator 2: Judgment Day...)

Shane Mahan grew up in a small town and dreamed of working on horror films. "The first images from a film that I remember as a child are from King Kong. From there on I was fascinated by horror and sci-fi books, paintings, and movies. I also had a strong desire to learn all I could about art since it seemed to go hand in hand with helping me to create monsters."

Shane moved to California during the effects boom of the early 1980s. He attended a school that specialized in film makeup and animatronics in addition to taking sculpting lessons from a portrait master. Shortly after completion, he began working at various effects studios around Hollywood, ultimately landing on the steps of Stan Winston Studio.

Shane's first film for Stan Winston Studio was The Terminator, for which he served as Key Sculptor. Thus began a long list of projects he created, coordinated, or supervised effects for, such as Aliens, Edward Scissorhands, Jurassic Park, Galaxy Quest and Big Fish, to name but a few.

Shane's diverse talents and skills earned him the title of Co-Producer on HBO's Creature Features, where he designed and coordinated several episodes, and lent his experience and vast knowledge of classic horror films to produce and further enhance the series.

Most recently, Shane supervised suit construction for, G.I. Joe, as well as the design and creation of the physical suits for 2008's box office smash, Iron Man. Having most recently completed work on Terminator 4 and Pandorum, Shane and studio are prepping for their next epic adventure with Iron Man 2.

As a brilliantly talented innovator it's no surprise that prior to his passing Stan would chose him, with three other partners, to carry on his legacy.

Gordon Smith

Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer / FXSmith
(Platoon, X-Men, X2...)

Gordon Smith is creatively known for his work with Oliver Stone on films like Platoon and J.F.K. and on the other side of the scale with films like Jacobs Ladder and the X-MEN. He and his colleges at FXSMITH Inc. pioneered and developed the State of the Art prosthetic technology used in both the film and medical industries today. He continues to break new ground now in the music industry with an all new global production, distribution, marketing and sales enterprise called Hippo.

VanArts at Vancouver ACM SIGGRAPH SPARK Visual Effects Festival 2009.

Thursday, January 22nd, VanCity Theatre



VanArts at Vancouver ACM SIGGRAPH SPARK Visual Effects Festival 2009.

Admissions Director Ken Priebe, (r) and VFX Department TA Max Schroeder staff the VanArts booth at the VanCity Theatre.

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Bill Braden (www.billbradenphoto.com)



The panel "Pipedreams: In Search of the Perfect Production Solution"

From left:

Moderator Dave Fracchia, Studio CTO at Radical Entertainment, Tim Belsher, Sequence Supervisor at Image Engine Design Inc., Troy Brooks, Co-founder & CEO of PipelineFX, Anthony Brown, Managing Director of Business Development at Seven Group, Leo Chan, Technical Director at EA Canada, & Doug Smith, VFX Department Head at VanArts

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Bill Braden (www.billbradenphoto.com)



The panel "Pipedreams: In Search of the Perfect Production Solution" Doug Smith discusses how game design infrastructure is applicable to visual effects.

From left:

Leo Chan, Technical Director at EA Canada, & Doug Smith, VFX Department Head at VanArts

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Bill Braden (www.billbradenphoto.com)



Panel: "Visual Effects in Vancouver"

From left:

Shawn Walsh, VFX Executive Producer at Image Engine, Winston Helgason, President & CG Supervisor at The Embassy, Michael Adkisson, Lead Compositor at MPC and Compositing Supervisor at VanArts, Ivan Hayden, President of the Visual Effects Association of BC

Not Pictured: Moderator Jason Dowdeswell, Studio Head at CIS Vancouver, Chris Harvey, Facility, VFX Supervisor & Head of 3D at Frantic VFX.

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Brian Van Tighen
(www.inkedimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

Marshall Krasser, Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM (r) discusses a shot with VFX student Carlos Guillen.

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Brian Van Tighen
(www.inkedimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

The "Gods" speak to students in the VanArts theatre. From left: Marshall Krasser, Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM, Michael Adkisson, Lead Compositor at MPC and Compositing Supervisor at VanArts, Paul Debevec, Associate Director of Graphics Research at the Institute for Creative Technology, USC, Mark Coleran, Visual Designer at GridIron Software, Shane Mahan, Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects, Gordon Smith, Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer at FXSmith, VanArts VFX TA Max Schroeder, Harrison Ellenshaw, VFX Artist & Designer, (seated in 1st row of audience,) and Doug Smith, VFX Department Head, VanArts.

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Brian Van Tighen
(www.inkedimaging.com)



Panel: "Visual Effects in Vancouver"

From left:

Chris Harvey, Facility, VFX Supervisor & Head of 3D at Frantic VFX, Shawn Walsh, VFX Executive Producer at Image Engine, Winston Helgason, President & CG Supervisor at The Embassy, Michael Adkisson, Lead Compositor at MPC and Compositing Supervisor at VanArts, Ivan Hayden, President of the Visual Effects Association of BC.

Not Pictured: Moderator Jason Dowdeswell, Studio Head at CIS Vancouver.

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray
(www.angusimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

VFX 10 students present their work-in-progress to the distinguished guests, Gordon Smith Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer at FXSmith and known for films like Platoon, J.F.K., Jacobs Ladder and the X-MEN, Harrison Ellenshaw, VFX Artist & Designer on Star Wars, The Black Hole, The Empire Strikes Back, Superman IV, Dick Tracy and Tron, Mark Coleran Visual Designer at GridIron Software, (Children of Men, The Island, The Bourne Identity,) Marshall Krasser, Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM (War of the Worlds, Titanic, Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back) and winner of 2 Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards, Paul Debevec Associate Director of Graphics Research at the Institute for Creative Technology, USC (Peter Jackson's King Kong, Spider-Man II & III, Superman Returns) and Shane Mahan Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects (Iron Man, Big Fish, Terminator 2: Judgment Day,) hosted by VanArts VFX Faculty Michael Adkisson Lead Compositor at MPC and VanArts VFX Dept. Compositing Supervisor, (Æon Flux, Outlander, Mars Attacks!) and Doug Smith, VanArts VFX Dept. Head, (Exorcist: The Beginning, Outlander, Tomb Raider VII.)

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray (www.angusimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

VFX 10 student Erik Bodvarsson discusses a shot with Marshall Krasser and Mike Adkisson, (foreground, L to R,) while VFX Student Ella Tu does the same with Mark Coleran, (background, L to R.)

Guests include Gordon Smith

Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer at FXSmith and known for films like Platoon, J.F.K., Jacobs Ladder and the X-MEN, Harrison Ellenshaw,

VFX Artist & Designer on Star Wars, The Black Hole, The Empire Strikes Back, Superman IV, Dick Tracy and Tron, Mark Coleran

Visual Designer at GridIron Software,

(Children of Men, The Island, The Bourne Identity,) Marshall Krasser,

Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM

(War of the Worlds, Titanic, Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back) and winner of 2 Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards, Paul Debevec

Associate Director of Graphics Research at the Institute for Creative Technology, USC

(Peter Jackson's King Kong, Spider-Man II & III, Superman Returns) and Shane Mahan
Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects

(Iron Man, Big Fish, Terminator 2: Judgment Day,) hosted by VanArts VFX Faculty Michael Adkisson

Lead Compositor at MPC and VanArts VFX Dept. Compositing Supervisor,

(Eon Flux, Outlander, Mars Attacks!) and Doug Smith, VanArts VFX Dept. Head, (Exorcist: The Beginning, Outlander, Tomb Raider VII.)

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray
(www.angusimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

VFX 10 student Daniel Gonzalez gets matte-painting tips from Harrison Ellenshaw, (L to R.)

Guests include Gordon Smith

Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer at FXSmith and known for films like Platoon, J.F.K., Jacobs Ladder and the X-MEN, Harrison Ellenshaw,

VFX Artist & Designer on Star Wars, The Black Hole, The Empire Strikes Back, Superman IV, Dick Tracy and Tron, Mark Coleran

Visual Designer at GridIron Software,

(Children of Men, The Island, The Bourne Identity,) Marshall Krasser,

Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM

(War of the Worlds, Titanic, Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back) and winner of 2 Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards, Paul Debevec

Associate Director of Graphics Research at the Institute for Creative Technology, USC

(Peter Jackson's King Kong, Spider-Man II & III, Superman Returns) and Shane Mahan

Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects

(Iron Man, Big Fish, Terminator 2: Judgment Day,) hosted by VanArts VFX Faculty Michael Adkisson

Lead Compositor at MPC and VanArts VFX Dept. Compositing Supervisor,

(Æon Flux, Outlander, Mars Attacks!) and Doug Smith, VanArts VFX Dept. Head, (Exorcist: The Beginning, Outlander, Tomb Raider VII.)

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray (www.angusimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

VFX 10 students Dustin Cumming, Erwin Dumoulin, Carlos Guillen and Hsi-Ching Lo, (seated, L to R,) and Marshall Krasser, (standing,) discuss the students' group project.

Guests include Gordon Smith

Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer at FXSmith and known for films like Platoon, J.F.K., Jacobs Ladder and the X-MEN, Harrison Ellenshaw,

VFX Artist & Designer on Star Wars, The Black Hole, The Empire Strikes Back, Superman IV, Dick Tracy and Tron, Mark Coleran

Visual Designer at GridIron Software,

(Children of Men, The Island, The Bourne Identity,) Marshall Krasser,

Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM

(War of the Worlds, Titanic, Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back) and winner of 2 Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards, Paul Debevec

Associate Director of Graphics Research at the Institute for Creative Technology, USC

(Peter Jackson's King Kong, Spider-Man II & III, Superman Returns) and Shane Mahan

Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects

(Iron Man, Big Fish, Terminator 2: Judgment Day,) hosted by VanArts VFX Faculty Michael Adkisson

Lead Compositor at MPC and VanArts VFX Dept. Compositing Supervisor,

(Æon Flux, Outlander, Mars Attacks!) and Doug Smith, VanArts VFX Dept. Head, (Exorcist: The Beginning, Outlander, Tomb Raider VII.)

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray (www.angusimaging.com)



"Attack of the VFX Gods," school tour of VanArts by SPARK Festival Speakers.

A wide shot of the speakers and VFX 10 students in the classroom.

Guests include Gordon Smith

Special Make-Up FX Designer & Technology Pioneer at FXSmith and known for films like Platoon, J.F.K., Jacobs Ladder and the X-MEN, Harrison Ellenshaw,

VFX Artist & Designer on Star Wars, The Black Hole, The Empire Strikes Back, Superman IV, Dick Tracy and Tron, Mark Coleran

Visual Designer at GridIron Software,

(Children of Men, The Island, The Bourne Identity,) Marshall Krasser,

Associate Visual Effects Supervisor at ILM

(War of the Worlds, Titanic, Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back) and winner of 2 Visual Effects Society (VES) Awards, Paul Debevec

Associate Director of Graphics Research at the Institute for Creative Technology, USC

(Peter Jackson's King Kong, Spider-Man II & III, Superman Returns) and Shane Mahan

Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects

(Iron Man, Big Fish, Terminator 2: Judgment Day,) hosted by VanArts VFX Faculty Michael Adkisson

Lead Compositor at MPC and VanArts VFX Dept. Compositing Supervisor,

(Eon Flux, Outlander, Mars Attacks!) and Doug Smith, VanArts VFX Dept. Head, (Exorcist: The Beginning, Outlander, Tomb Raider VII.)

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray (www.angusimaging.com)



Panel: "Visual Effects in Vancouver"

From left:

Chris Harvey, Facility, VFX Supervisor & Head of 3D at Frantic VFX, Shawn Walsh, VFX Executive Producer at Image Engine, Winston Helgason, President & CG Supervisor at The Embassy, Michael Adkisson, Lead Compositor at MPC and Compositing Supervisor at VanArts, Ivan Hayden, President of the Visual Effects Association of BC.

Not Pictured: Moderator Jason Dowdeswell, Studio Head at CIS Vancouver.

Photo by VanArts Digital Photography student Angus Macgillivray
(www.angusimaging.com)