

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINESE ANIMATION

ANIMATION

DECEMBER
2023

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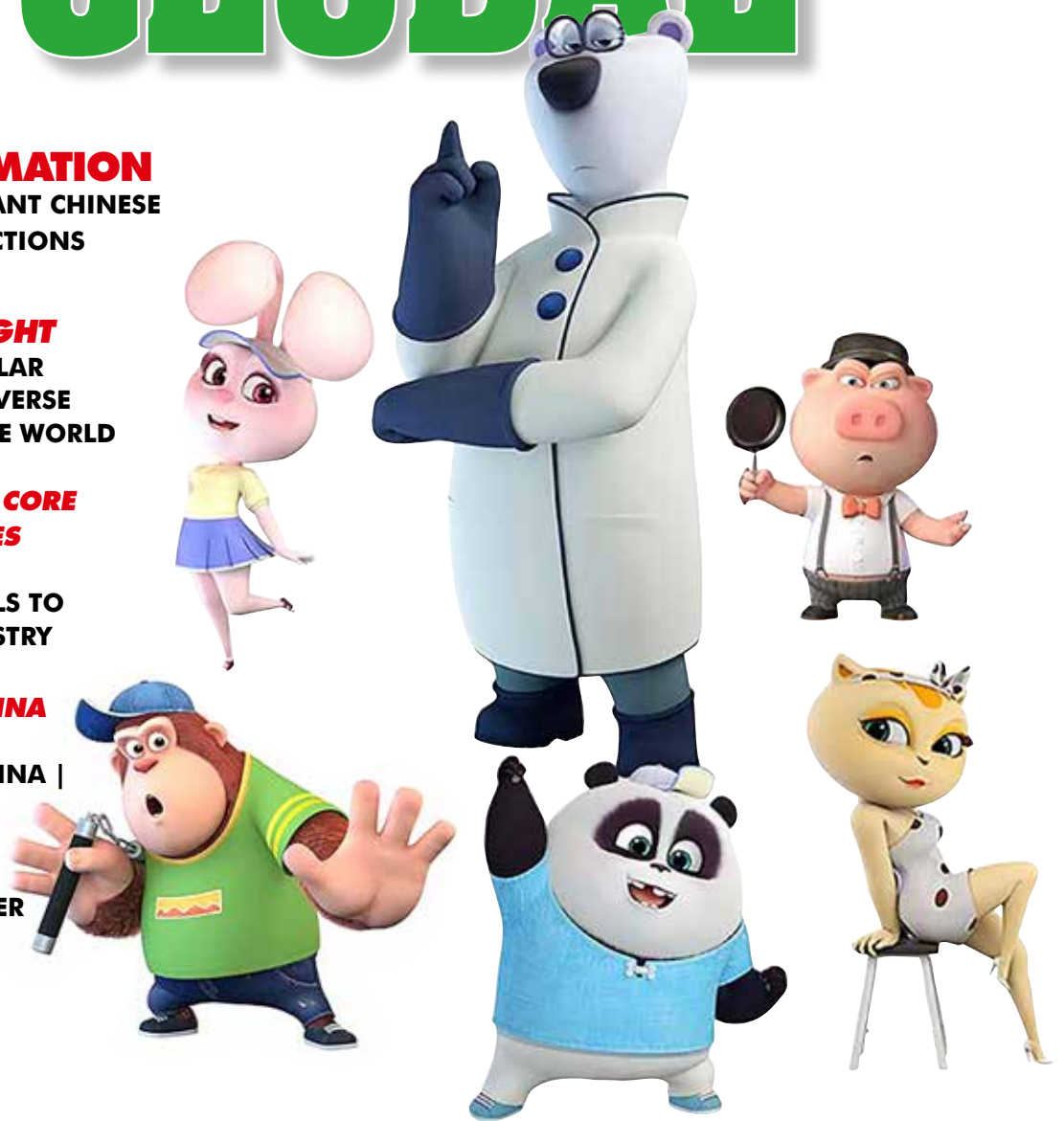
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动画100 2023

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINESE ANIMATION
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ANIMATION GLOBAL

MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL



By **RAYMOND D. NEOH**

THIS EDITION OF THE GLOBAL ANIMATION MAGAZINE IS THE FIRST ISSUE THAT WE ARE PUBLISHING AFTER THE END OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THAT HEAVILY AFFECTED OUR INDUSTRY GLOBALLY, WITH NO EXCEPTION IN CHINA. THIS YEAR WE ARE CELEBRATING AND COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINESE ANIMATION. CHINESE ANIMATION HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM ITS BEGINNINGS IN CEL ANIMATION IN THE 1920'S,

TO THE VIBRANT CG ANIMATION OF TODAY. TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY, A DOCUMENTARY OF 5 EPISODES AT 35 MINUTES EACH WAS PRODUCED BY BRTV KAKU SATELLITE TV CHANNEL, WHICH WILL BE BROADCAST IN CHINA BY THE END OF 2023. AN ENGLISH VERSION OF THE DOCUMENTARY WILL BE AVAILABLE, PLEASE STAY TUNED.

THE CHINESE ORIGINAL IP BRAND "PANGE THE PANDA" HAS GRACED THE COVER OF OUR MAGAZINE. PANGE IS AN ORIGINAL CHINESE IP THAT HAS INTERNATIONAL APPEAL. BY FEATURING THE PANGE IP FAMILY, WE HOPE TO HELP PROMOTE CHINESE ORIGINAL IP IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, GIVING MORE PEOPLE AND COMPANIES A CHANCE TO OBSERVE THE CREATIVITY OF CHINESE CREATORS. CHINA IS THE COUNTRY WHERE WE ARE BASED, AND WE HOPE TO OPEN UP MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GLOBAL PARTNERS TO ENGAGE IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH CHINESE COMPANIES. THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED SHOULD IN LEARNING MORE MAY CONTACT THE PUBLISHER, OR VISIT OUR PORTAL, [HTTPS://WWW.AWNCHINA.CN](https://www.awnchina.cn).

IN EVERY ISSUE OF OUR MAGAZINE, WE LIKE TO COVER ANIMATION FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. THIS TIME AROUND, WE FEATURE ANIMATION FROM EUROPE, ASIA AND AFRICA. WE HOPE TO EXPAND OUR COVERAGE TO EVEN MORE GEOGRAPHIES AND CULTURES IN THE FUTURE.

DIGITAL ECONOMY CORE TECHNOLOGY (DECT) DRIVING OUR INDUSTRY IS ALSO FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE OF OUR MAGAZINE. CG GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT, AND ITS SISTER COMPANIES KRYSTAL INSTITUTE AND KRYSTAL TECHNOLOGY, ARE PIONEERING THE EDUCATION AND APPLICATION OF OPEN-SOURCE TOOLS FOR USE IN PRODUCTION AND CREATION. WE ARE CRAFTING A SERIES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO HELP NURTURE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CG ARTISTS AND ENGINEERS. MOREOVER, WE ARE DESIGNING AN ENTERPRISE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM EMPOWERED WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI), CRUCIAL FOR THE ACG INDUSTRY TO TRANSFORM AS WE ENTER THE DIGITAL ECONOMY. WE HOPE OUR READERS CAN PICK UP NEW IDEAS FROM THESE ARTICLES AND APPLY THEM IN THEIR WORK.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST IS A FEATURE ON BLENDER STUDIO AND THE IMMINENT RELEASE OF BLENDER 4.0. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH BLENDER SINCE THEY PUBLISHED BLENDER 2.7, AND WE ARE EXCITED TO SEE THE RELEASE OF 4.0 AND BEYOND. WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE CG COMMUNITY TO HELP EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARTISTS, WE HAVE FORMED THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BLENDER EDUCATORS (IABE), AND WE WELCOME EVERYONE TO JOIN OUR EFFORTS IN MAKING BLENDER MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL. IABE WILL BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE BLENDER CURRICULUM AND DESIGN A QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK TO CERTIFY EDUCATORS' AND KIDS' ACHIEVEMENTS, PROMOTING THE PROJECT THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION COMPETITION USING BLENDER.

AI IS GOING TO IMPACT OUR INDUSTRY LIKE A TSUNAMI. WE ARE HOSTING THE INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL AI AND CREATIVITY CONFERENCE IN CHINA NEXT YEAR. BY STAGING SUCH A CONFERENCE, WE HOPE TO GATHER THE BEST MINDS AT THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN AI AND CREATIVE ARTS TO HELP US CHART A COURSE FOR OUR INDUSTRY'S TECH AND INNOVATION.

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ANIMATION GLOBAL



COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINESE ANIMATION

AIRING SOON: DOCUMENTARY SERIES ANIMATION 100

SOURCE: BRTV KAKU SATELLITE TV CHANNEL

On 10th May 1923, an animated advertisement named "Pause" was screened in Shanghai's Carlton Theatre, pulling back the curtains on the grand history of Chinese animation. From *Princess Iron Fan* (1941), the first animated feature film in Asia born amidst the shadow of war, to *Baby Tadpoles Look for Their Mother* (1961),

The Monkey King: Uproar in Heaven (1964) and countless classics created by the Shanghai Animation Film Studio, to *Monkey King: Hero is Back* (2015), which became a symbol for "the rise of national comics" with a 956 million RMB box office..... Animation has not only brought happiness and showcased beauty to generations of film-goers; in fact, buried within this history is a century of change and advancement of China's culture and technology.

In 2023, to commemorate

the centenary of the birth of Chinese animation, Beijing Radio and Television Station (BRTV) KAKU Children's TV will launch the documentary Animation 100. Under guidance from the National Radio and Television Administration, the China Animation Association, and the Beijing Municipal Radio and Television Bureau, the documentary will premiere on KAKU TV at the end of 2023, and will also be available to stream





online in the Bilibili membership zone, uncovering the stories behind Chinese animation for animation lovers around the world.

Five major themes, exploring the history of Chinese animation

Animation 100 consists of 5 episodes at 35-minutes each, respectively focusing on 5 themes within Chinese animation: Milestones in Chinese animation development, key figures, aesthetic styles, Sino-foreign exchanges, and Chinese animation in the new era. Each episode presents the stories of 3 to 4 individuals related to the animation industry.

The series' protagonists include the Wan Brothers (pioneers of Chinese animation), the artists of the Shanghai Animation Film Studio, and young authors and animation students who have made their mark in the animation industry. This documentary is the first to document the beginnings

of Chinese animation with solid archival details, tracing all the way back to Cy Yang, the first expert animator in China.

Behind the Scenes of Chinese Animation: Uniting for a Historic Project

Animation 100's planning and production spanned one and a half years. The program team traveled to over 10 cities including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Wuhan, and Tokyo for filming, and visited numerous leading animation producers including Shanghai Animation Film Studio, CCTV Animation, Light Chaser Animation, and WinSing, etc. Further trips were made to the China Film Archive, China National Film Museum, Beijing Film Academy, Suzhou Art & Design Technology Institute and other research institutes. Close to 100 guests from academia and industry were interviewed, to strive to create an accurate and faithful depiction of Chinese animation,



at this landmark centenary for the industry, as a contribution to the annals of history.

Echoing the anthological effort of the documentary, its visual designs draw on the Chinese painting One Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains. China's classic animated images of the past hundred years will gather in the same space for the first time, bringing back everyone's happy memories growing up with animation, so as to celebrate the accomplishments of Chinese animation.

Fun segment pioneers a "documentary-for-kids" format

Animation, apart from being the subject of Animation 100, also acts as the medium through which

the documentary innovates its narrative methods. In order to create a documentary that children could consume, the directorial team of KAKU Children's TV has designed an "animation interview room" for this occasion.

In the documentary, Mickey Mouse, the Monkey King, Pleasant Goat, GG Bond and other classic animated characters come to life in the interview and animation production rooms, either to have a fun chat with their creators or to answer the audience's questions. They also participate in guest narration of the history of animation, bringing a refreshing audio-visual style for audiences' enjoyment.

Line by line, frame by frame, we recount a hundred years of extraordinary tales in the evolving

saga of Chinese animation. Animation 100 is a love letter to the Chinese animation industry, and presents the spiritual lineage of generations of Chinese animators who have worked tirelessly for their craft, persevering with endless passion for the blossoming art form. In this documentary film packed with history depth, romantic tradition and convivial entertainment, audiences of all ages are bound to relive the authentic emotions felt when watching cartoons for the very first time.



A CENTURY OF UPS AND DOWNS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE ANIMATION FILMS

BY: CARLOS CHEN

Twenty years after the birth of the world's first animated film, Chinese animated films began to take off. In 1926, the Wan brothers produced China's first animated short film, *The Big Trouble in the Drawing Room*. Later in 1941, influenced by *Snow White*, the Wan brothers brought birth to Asia's first animated feature film, *Princess Iron Fan*, which caused a sensation. It is not hard to see that Chinese animation films had a high starting point at the beginning.

In the decade or so since then, Chinese animation films have developed steadily. In 1957, Shanghai Animation Film Studio was established, which became a milestone event in the development of Chinese animation films. In 1964, the studio released the 120-minute masterpiece *The Monkey King*, which became a classic of Chinese animation. The film's art style influenced several generations of Chinese animators.

Marked by the founding of the studio, the Chinese animation film industry has experienced a period of prosperity. During this period, various artists gave full play to their creativity and produced a series of animated films with Chinese characteristics and Chinese style. Original art film genres such as paper-cutting films, origami films, and ink animation films were shown in the market and gained popularity.

Such prosperity did not last long, affected by a series of factors, the development of Chinese animation film stagnated for decades. In the

early 1980s, the industry began to revive. From the 80s to the early 90s, China's animation film market was flooded by foreign products, barely seeing domestic animation films. In 1999, *Lotus Lantern* was released. It was the first Chinese animation film made with computerized 3D special

effects technology. The film was shot in feature film mode, with elaborate design reflected in the images, styling, and soundtrack. The release of *Lotus Lantern* was a huge success, with a bumper crop at the box office, and derivative products such as the film's episodes were also a huge hit, giving

Jiang Ziya: Legend of Deification



Asia's first animated feature film Princess Iron Fan



Chinese animation film classic The Monkey King

Chinese animation films some new hope for the new century.

In the new century, Chinese animation films finally made a breakthrough. In 2005, China's first CG animation movie *Thru the Moebius Strip*, which took five years to produce, invested 130 million RMB and used more than 300 animators, was officially launched. At that time, industry insiders commented that the production technology and quality of the film were at the top level in Asia. Importantly, its appearance inspired related practitioners, and then blew the horn of China's animation film.

Since then, with the rapid expansion of China's animation industry, the animation film industry has also shown a booming trend. From the low-cost but quite popular *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* series to the stone-cold big production *Monkey King: Hero is Back* in 2015, the progress of Chinese animation films has aroused enthusiastic reactions from the market. In this period, stylized animation films such as *Big Fish & Begonia* (2016) and *Dahufa* (2017) have given audiences confidence that Chinese animation films are constantly progressing and capable of developing their unique path.

Industry status quo

On July 26, 2019, *Ne Zha* went on-

screen in mainland China. With its creative adaptation of classic Chinese legends and beautiful graphics, *Ne Zha* was a huge success in the market, breaking several box office records along the way. When it was pulled from theatres, the film collected over 5 billion RMB at the box office and eventually represented mainland China in the competition for Best International Film at the Academy Awards. *Ne Zha's* success broke the Chinese audience's stereotype that animation films are not as good as live-action films. From that moment on, people began to recognize the tremendous power of animation films, and more and more attention was paid to animation films inside and outside the industry.

Ne Zha showed the booming status quo of Chinese animation films. Data from Orient Securities showed that in recent years, Chinese animation films have been maintaining high production. From 2015 to 2019, the number of Chinese animation films' production has always remained at around 50. Something interesting is that most of these animation movies are taken from classical mythology and folklore. As a result, those stories evoked the collective memory within the audience and subsequently trigger enthusiastic reactions.

Entering 2020, affected by the

pandemic, China's animation film production has declined, but the overall good development trend has not disappeared. The animated film *Jiang Ziya: Legend of Deification*, which was postponed from January to October release, also takes its material from Chinese mythology and legends and is also popular in the market. The film broke the first-day box office record held and eventually became the best-selling Chinese animated movie of 2020 with a box office revenue of 1.603 billion RMB.

The booming development is due to many factors. Policy support has led to the emergence of talents in the industry. Data show that by the end of 2016, China had approved the establishment of 20 national animation industry bases and 8 national animation teaching and research bases. Animation talents from all over the country can come together and pool their wisdom. At the same time, seeing the good works in the market, the enthusiasm of Chinese animation film practitioners is constantly stimulated. Also, they gain confidence from the positive feedback of the market and then work harder on animation creation.

Industry Outlook

Although the status quo is booming, there is still a big gap between China's animation film industry and animation

powerhouses such as the United States and Japan, mainly in terms of production and market performance.

In terms of production, the international standard for the production cycle of feature-length animation films is 5 years. Take Pixar's animation film production as an example, the pre-script creation takes two years, and the production of scenes, and special effects takes three years. Due to the relative shortage of funds and the scarcity of practitioners, the production cycle of Chinese feature-length animation is often longer than five years. Also, the finished product is not all as beautiful and moving as *Ne Zha*.

In terms of market performance, the entire Chinese animation market is still immature. In a mature animation market, there will be more sub-sectors, and the share of the animation film industry is therefore lower. Statistic from Orient Securities shows that the box office of animation films accounted for 2.4% of the total output value of China's animation industry in 2018. The box office of Japanese animation movies occupied 2.0% of its animation industry in the same year. There is still a gap between China's animation film industry and its neighbor.

At the same time, there are still some 2019 Chinese box office champion, *Ne Zha*



In 2015, *Thru the Moebius Strip 3D* was released

stereotypes in the Chinese audience's perception of animation. Many audiences still think that animation movies are for children, and then show no interest. The current situation of Chinese animation films has become a double-edged sword to a certain extent. If the films only depict mythological stories or animals and lack realistic themes, the road of the industry may become narrower and narrower.

For nearly a century, China's animation films have gone through ups and downs

and have been narrowing the gap with the strongest countries in animation films. Orient Securities anticipates, that by 2025, Chinese animation films will account for 50% of the overall box office of the animation film market. It is easy to believe that there will be more animation films with Chinese characteristics like *Ne Zha* appearing in the market in the future.



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PANGE THE PANDA

CHINA'S ORIGINAL IP BRAND



SOURCE: HONGYAO CULTURE

In June 2008, the first episode of the DreamWorks Animation movie *Kung Fu Panda* was released in theaters and grossed 4.48 billion RMB at the global box office. Every Chinese audience member who has seen the movie had a question in their mind: Kung Fu is Chinese, and pandas are also Chinese, but why is *Kung Fu Panda* created by an American animation team? Giant pandas are a unique IP with the highest international recognition and the most potential value for China, and in Chengdu, Sichuan, the hometown of giant pandas, the panda IP star "Pange the Panda" is rising onto the global stage.

The "Pange the Panda IP Family" is

an original Chinese animation IP series created by Sichuan Hongyao Culture Communication Co., Ltd. over 10 years. Fish Wu, the founder and CEO of Hongyao Culture, is also jokingly called "Pange's Father" by many fans of Pange. In 2000, as a graduate from the first cohort of the animation program of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Wu joined the most professional 3D animation company in China at that time, Global Digital Creations in Shenzhen, becoming one of the earliest founding employees. During his time with GDC, Wu served as the company's 3D animation software training teacher, modeling department supervisor, project manager, art director, and director, and participated in the production and management of projects such as China's first 3D animation film *Thru the Moebius Strip* (2005), Italian animation film *Winx*

Club: The Secret of the Lost Kingdom (2007), and many other animated series in cooperation with international animation corporations such as Disney and Nickelodeon, including *Higglytown Heroes* (2004-2008), *Bubble Guppies* (2011-), and *Bratz* (2005-2008). Through cooperation and exchange with international, first-class animation organizations and experts, Wu accumulated rewarding experiences in international animation design and production and hoped to create China's original super IP someday.

In 2012, Wu chose to go back to his hometown to start his own business to utilize the professional experience he had accumulated during his many years of cooperation with international teams at GDC, to develop his high-quality original projects in China. After a year and a half of detailed research



on the domestic animation industry, he founded Hongyao Culture. At the time, there were almost no successful cases of original animation in China, and it was popular in the industry to say, "OEM producers are awaiting death, IP producers seek death". In the absence of optimism in the market, Wu decided to self-finance his journey of original IP branding.

Pange the Panda IP Family

Fish Wu's idea was very simple: he wanted to create his original works, handcraft a series of classic animation IP images, and make a truly classic animation production that could be passed on to the next generation. As early as when he was a student at the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Wu conceived the idea of creating a cartoon orangutan, and "Pakun the Orangutan" became the first original cartoon character designed by Wu's

team. In adherence with international animation design and production standards, the image of Pakun went through dozens of overhauls, repeated detailed adjustments, and action tests, to finally create the vivid and adorable image of Pakun loved by fans.

After that, Wu designed a good partner for him, the panda "Pange", which is very characteristic of Sichuan. After a period of collecting market feedback, the latter slowly became the main character, and the name of the project was adjusted from "Pakun" to "Pange and Pakun", and eventually "Pange the Panda". Wu continued to lead the team to release more characters, to strike while the iron was still hot. Currently, the 9 main characters of the "Pange the Panda" IP family, namely Pange the Panda, Orangutan Pakun, Polar Bear Naxiong, Rabbit Lingling, Cat Mimosu, and the 4 Pig Nose Brothers,

have all been released in both 2D and 3D versions. The "Pange the Panda" feature film is in the planning stage and will feature over 60 animal characters with distinctive characteristics and personalities, making it a "Chinese *Zootopia*".





Since its launch, the "Pange the Panda" IP family image has been widely praised by the industry and recognized as "China's most international animation IP" and "the only Chinese panda IP whose design and production quality can compete with that of *Kung Fu Panda*". When Wu attended the Hong Kong International Licensing Show in 2016 with "Pange the Panda", experts mistakenly thought that the "Pange the Panda" series was a new character launched by Disney. At the 2017 Annecy International Animation Film Festival in France, "Pange the Panda" became the most popular Chinese animation IP among attendees; at the end of the exhibition, due to its popularity, there was even an incident in which samples of "Pange the Panda" T-shirts were stolen. In 2018, "Pange the Panda" was selected among more than 300 IPs nationwide and won the "Most Commercially Valuable Animation Image Award" at the China IP Industry Conference - Comic, Film and Tourism Venture Capital Competition.

Wu believes in "Good structure, for good strategy, for good results!". Hongyao Culture is adamant about a business strategy of placing high-quality IP content at its core, then continuously expanding to derivative products, cross-border licensing, and offline business.

Hongyao Culture's Corporate Strategy

In the early stage of the project, Hongyao Culture produced IM stickers based on Pange the Panda IP's cute image and character which attracted the first batch of hardcore fans. The refined animation performances, emotionally charged designs, and movie-quality animation performances propped up the popularity of these stickers, reaching tens of millions of fans. Today, the Pange the Panda IP series of stickers is available on WeChat, QQ, Baidu, Sogou, iQIYI, weshineApp, withyouApp, LINE, and all other mainstream emoticon platforms in China. Pange the Panda stickers have been circulated in 230 countries and regions around the world through the overseas LINE platform,

with a cumulative total of more than 213 million downloads and 3.7 billion sends, making it the highest quality, most popular, and most influential Chinese panda emoticon series in the world.

Pange and Pakun's Gourmet Scenery is a series of animated short films created by Hongyao Culture. Each episode tells the story of Pange the Panda and Pakun the Orangutan, producing specialty cuisine at different famous Sichuan scenic locations. Giant pandas, food, and scenic attractions are all highlights of Sichuan's local culture. Hongyao Culture hopes to bring joy to the audience while showing the local attractions and customs of Sichuan with their unique form of animation; to spread Sichuan's local culture to the whole world; to create a new name card of Sichuan culture; and to promote the cultural heritage of Tianfu to international audiences. In particular, "Pange and Pakun's Three Cannons" tells the story of Pange and Pakun making a famous snack "Three Cannons" at one of Chengdu's most



notable attractions, the Kuanzhai Alley. The short film won the "Professional Group - Gold Award" of the 2020 Golden Panda Tianfu Creative Design Awards, under the Digital Creative Design Category; the Zunxiong Award of the 2020 Creative Trend Pioneer Competition; First Prize in the Film and Video Animation Category of the 2021 Chengdu-Chongqing Cup Digital Artwork Competition; First Prize in the Digital Animation Category of the 2022 Giant Panda Digital Art Creative Design Competition; and other top prizes in several competitions.

A new episode of the short film series, "Pange and Pakun's Hot Pot with Changing Faces", is currently being produced. The story takes place in Jinli, an attraction in Chengdu of equal prominence as Kuanzhai Alley, where Pange performs the classic "Changing Faces and Spitting Fire" act in Sichuan Opera, featuring fun scenes of Pakun tasting Sichuan-style spicy hot pot.

Another series of animated short films, *The Daily Life of Pange and Pakun*, was created by Hongyao Culture to tell interesting stories about the daily lives of Pakun and Pange, showing the personality conflicts between the two main characters, to highlight the differences between Chinese and Western cultural backgrounds.

After successively launching a series of IM stickers, cell phone themes, comic illustrations, picture books, short videos, an animated series of short films, and other creative content, the first feature film of "Pange the Panda", the pinnacle of animation content, has entered its early stages of production. The story of the movie will involve man and nature living in harmony. Giant pandas, which have experienced the harsh environment of the Quaternary

glaciation period, have been sheltered by nature by following the fundamental principles of respecting nature and adapting to the environment, which is also the ancient and profound philosophy towards survival and living within Chinese culture.

With the gradual enrichment of the IP personas, various types of creative content continue to be presented, and the number of fans is steadily increasing, laying a solid foundation for the development path of Pange the Panda's IP industrial strategy. At present, Hongyao Culture has launched

children's furniture, 3C products, stationery, and other peripheral products, and has entered into cross-border cooperation with domestically and internationally famous brands and enterprises, with more than 33 types of licensed products and more than 85 partners. Authorized partners and projects include the CCTV Panda Channel, CIMC International Mascot Conference at the Chengdu Intangible Cultural Heritage Park, OCT-Jinxiu'anren Huahui Park, a co-branded poster of the movie *The Climbers*, Ito-Yokado, Baidu, Sogou, New Hope Dairy, Guizhou



SILKROAD VISUAL TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN CULTURAL INDUSTRY INNOVATION



Bainianqianzhuang Wine, Wacom China, and so on. Currently, Hongyao Culture is further cooperating with Qatar Panda Park, and Pange the Panda IP has already developed products for the young market with a famous winery.

Panda IP Themed Commercial Complex

In 2022, Hongyao Culture is actively promoting the establishment of a Pange the Panda IP Theme Park, Pange the Panda Animation Cultural and Creative Industry Park, and an education base in Chengdu to create an animation and panda IP theme business complex integrating a theme park, industrial park, education and study base, animation exhibition, and expo center, themed commercial quarter, and themed hotel and lodging. The park will link upstream

and downstream industry clusters of animation enterprises, host industry conferences, and various animation activities, as well as form school-local cooperation, to effectively promote the rapid development of Chengdu's local animation industry and economy, and facilitate the integrated development of Chengdu's cultural industry and tourism industry.

In addition to the layout of the traditional animation IP industry chain, Hongyao Culture is also actively preparing for the landing of the Pange the Panda Metaverse-related business, which is expected to meet the audience in 2023.

After 10 years of unremitting efforts by the entire team at Hongyao

Culture, the Pange the Panda IP has accumulated a large number of fans, has a wide range of social awareness, and has initially opened up a tight-knit ecology from original content to cross-border licensing, derivatives, theme parks, and other offline business scenarios. Pange the Panda has become the best IP spokesperson for the city of Chengdu, the "Panda Capital", and is gradually growing into China's most famous "National IP".



BY: CLOUDY PAN

Founded in 2002, SILKROAD VISUAL Technology Co., Ltd. landed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange GEM on November 4, 2016, becoming the first listed company in the field of CG digital creativity (Stock Code: 300556). Based on CG (Computer Graphics), VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality), and other digital visual technology applications, SILKROAD VISUAL provides creativity-centered and market demand-oriented digital visualization solutions, offering the whole process of a design concept, marketing promotion, to the final overall presentation to completing the 'closed-loop' ecosystem of products and services.

As a pioneer and promoter in the field of visual technology and application,

SILKROAD VISUAL integrates culture and technology, focusing on the application of technology and marketing around digital creativity and culture, providing professional digital visualization services for major national celebrations – such as the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China. In order to promote Chinese traditional culture, SILKROAD VISUAL has joined hands with the National Museum of China to create the "National Permanent Collection Level 1 Exhibit" - "Emperor Qianlong's Tour to the South, Vol. 12, Returning to the Forbidden City" using digital restoration technology, which unlocks the multiple values of traditional cultural IP with cultural "empowerment" and provides unlimited possibilities to show the charm of traditional culture.

Since its establishment, SILKROAD

VISUAL has been deeply engaged in the field of digital exhibition and display and has continuously outputted a cumulative number of outstanding digital exhibition and display projects to activate and upgrade the experience scene of urban public space. In recent years, SILKROAD VISUAL has integrated digital technology and cultural construction and created major projects such as the "Shenzhen Urban Planning Exhibition" and "Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center" to create an important channel for understanding human history, local characteristics, urbanization process, and future construction development in China. Among them, "Shenzhen Urban Planning Exhibition" has won 9 international industry awards, successfully bringing China's urban planning achievements to the world.

SILKROAD VISUAL is committed to using technology to bridge the domain boundaries between virtual and reality,

grasp the new opportunities of the digital economy, and expand the new space of high-quality development of metaverse concepts. With the support of capital investors, SILKROAD VISUAL takes computer graphics image processing technology as the basis and 3D technology as the core, and anchors on the development strategy of "culture + technology" to further lay out the research and development of visual cutting-edge technology applications, covering Digital Twin Applications (Theia Digital Technology), Visual Cloud Computing (Renderbus Technology), VR/AR/MR (SilkRoad Dynamics) and other new digital infrastructure of digital visual technology application research Transforming cultural creativity into digital visual products and services, led by technological innovation and technology promotion, promoting the integration of cultural and creative industries and bringing content model innovation.

With "culture + technology" as its development strategy, SILKROAD

VISUAL integrates the advantages of resources in the fields of culture and technology and continues to explore new possibilities for the digital development, research, and display of Chinese culture. In the context of the national construction wave, SILKROAD VISUAL with its forward-looking digital creativity and solid technical accumulation, will strive to become a Chinese force in the digital creative field that influences world culture through continuous technical innovation and field expansion.

City planning exhibition

While urban construction is being presented in a new and diversified form, innovative ways of displaying exhibition content becomes the finishing touch to sublimate the content of urban construction and create a digital exhibition center. SILKROAD VISUAL uses the power of digital technology to integrate with the urban planning content to create a new round of exhibitions at the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center. The Exhibition Center fully utilizes new



concepts, new technologies, and new means to comprehensively interpret the new stage of Shanghai's development and present the city concept of this city: a humanistic city with more temperature and culture; an innovative city with more vitality and prosperity; and a more resilient and sustainable ecological city.

The new display of the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center focuses on global trends, implements national strategies, and is based on Shanghai's reality. SILKROAD VISUAL is interspersed with various display forms, with more than 100 multimedia films, more than 500 images, and more than 90,000 words to color the exhibition display, shockingly presenting a city card with great exploration value and a sense of cultural weight.

City Brain

With the advent of the era of smart infrastructure, the use of wisdom and big data information is considered as a major basis for promoting urban governance, and the "City Brain" was born. As a landmark window to showcase Taizhou's digital reform

achievements, the Taizhou "City Brain" Operation Center (Digital Center) integrates the "City Brain" operation command and digital display experience. SILKROAD VISUAL empowerment Taizhou to build a multi-scene, immersive digital twin city, create a new infrastructure to support the sustainable development of the city in the future, and provide a high-tech platform for citizens to touch the pulse of digital Taizhou.

To focus on the latest achievements of Taizhou in recent years in promoting digital reform, THEIA combines the actual business needs of Taizhou, based on digital twin technology, and efficiently aggregates Taizhou's city-wide operational data, accessing digital twin scenarios as "Flood Control and Prevention and Ship and Harbor Access", "Taizhou Culture and Tourism", "Industrial Internet", "E-Receipts and Healthy Taizhou", "Market Supervision and Environmental Protection", "Education Through-Train and Farmer Support Online", "Industrial IOT", and "Digital Economy". THEIA's data-driven approach enables a comprehensive

understanding of the city's vital signs and builds a Taizhou city brain IOC that can sense everything and interconnect everything, laying the foundation for the sustainable development of Taizhou.

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ANNECY 2023

CARNIVAL OF WORLD ANIMATION FILM AFTER THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

SOURCE: FESTIVAL D'ANNECY

In 2023, Mexico is the guest country. Mexico and the Foreign Ministry will bring to Annecy a diverse catalog of animators to promote both a new generation of artists and the country as an international center for investment and talent that receives productions from all over the world who want to work with Mexicans and in Mexico in the spectacular and infinite creative space of animation.

Mexican animation will be in the spotlight, and the Annecy Festival's official poster was designed by Animator and Director Jorge R. Gutierrez, Emmy and Annie Award-winner, Mexican animator, painter, voice actor, writer, and director, a Mexican animator, painter, voice actor, writer, and director. An aficionado of Mexican culture and folklore, he has created a genuinely joyous, and heart-warming firework display of references announcing a very colorful edition!

"The poster is very inspired by all the spectacular nighttime parties at our beloved Festival. A Mexican 'Xochimilco' train boat arrives on Lake Annecy carrying lots of happy and excited Mexicans ready to party", Jorge explained. "The city itself is glowing, it's shining like a warm magical place".

"Jorge's work is deeply rooted in Mexican popular culture and folklore, but it is also zealously festive. He flaunts a generous, Baroque, and colorful artistry that is full of surprises, which incarnates the Festival's very spirit. This poster invites you to come and party with us!" - Marcel Jean, the

Annecy Festival's Artistic Director Including Mexico animation, The Animation, Pride, and Diversity theme

will be in the spotlight as well with 33 projects received this summer from the world. Three projects are selected. They are Le Dernier des cailloux by



Caroline Cherrier (France), Shadow Work by Areito Echevarria and Raqi Syed (New Zealand), and The Bird Kingdom (O Reino dos Pássaros) by Wesley Rodrigues (Brazil/France) and the Honorary Cristal will be awarded to the filmmaker.

"This theme has become a topical issue, especially for young filmmakers, many of whom tackle issues related to gender and diversity every year", explains Marcel Jean, the Festival's Artistic Director. A program coordinated by Benoit Berthe Siward – Founder of The Animation Showcase and Co-Founder of LGBTQ+ in Animation – to provide a range of views on recent productions.

In June 2020 CITIA launched the arts residency "Graphic Development for Animation Feature Film" to assist with creation. The Annecy Festival Residency provides a tailor-made offer to each of the selected projects, in an inspiring and stimulating ecosystem, as well as connecting with esteemed mentors in the animation sector. This year, 2023 winners have just joined the third Annecy Festival Residency for three intense, stimulating, and productive months. Congrats!

For 2023, the Mifa is creating Le Campus, a new venue, especially for students and talents for the whole duration of the Market: training and recruitment will be center stage! Schools, institutions, and local hubs will take advantage of the privatized special area to organize meetings between the talents and studios.

The Mifa Campus will be offering 4 days of content from Tuesday 13th to Friday 16th of June!



METaverse

A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY



BY: CHRIS KWOK

There is no single definition of "Metaverse". Broadly speaking, Metaverse is a 3D virtual network focusing on social connection and a decentralized economic system. In this system, the location of Avatars and other digital assets is not fixed, but rather decentralized and stored in distributed locations. Thus, content creators and users are linked instead of being connected by intermediaries such as social media, which frees user data from the control of social media.

Companies such as Meta, Roblox, Microsoft, Valve, and Animoca Brands are investing in technologies for the

metaverse. They are trying to combine cutting-edge technologies such as Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality, and Virtual Reality in the metaverse, to expand the applications of the metaverse and expand its commercial benefits.

Applications of the Metaverse

Within the metaverse, users are allowed to conduct any activity, so the possibilities of the metaverse are limitless.

In business, metaverse technology can be used to create virtual offices where users can interact and collaborate to complete meetings and other work-related communications. In addition, companies can use metaverse technology to market, distribute messages, and

guide customers to use products and sell directly, integrating the entire sales process and making it more convenient for users.

In education, metaverse technology can be used to study and experience various historical events and living environments. This kind of experiential learning can enhance students' interest in learning and enable them to acquire knowledge faster. For entertainment, users can experience virtual concerts and remote visits to famous art museums and galleries in the metaverse.

Metaverse and Animation

Metaverse has great potential because it can provide an infinite variety of interaction and immersion, which could be a sign of how the animation



industry will change in the future. With metaverse technology, viewers do not have to just sit in front of a screen and watch an animation but become part of the story, participating in it and deciding where it goes.

The metaverse is very malleable and has infinite possibilities. Nowadays, various media and virtual platforms are emerging, and various technical bottlenecks of information technology

are breaking through, so it is foreseeable that shortly, our lives will change forever.

For animation creators, a decentralized metaverse means that telling their own little stories will become mainstream. In the metaverse, different voices from all over the world will be free to connect and share. Costly blockbusters will no longer be the center of the animation industry; instead, the infinite creativity provided by global animation talents will reign supreme.

There are still technical barriers to the integration of metaverse and animation, but as people's real identities become more closely connected to their virtual lives, more new technologies will emerge and eventually lead to changes in people's lifestyles, and such changes will continue in the animation industry. This time, the changes will be more personal and fantastic.



AMP WONG

THE PIONEERING ROAD OF A CHINESE ANIMATOR

BY: SOPHIA ZHU

Amp Wong (黃家康) is an animation director who started his career in Hong Kong and succeeded in Mainland China. In more than twenty years of practice in the animation industry, he has experienced the rapid development of the Hong Kong animation industry and the re-emergence of the Mainland animation industry.

As a participant in the wave of new Chinese animation films, Wong's films *White Snake (2019)* (白蛇:緣起) and *Green Snake (2021)* (白蛇2:青蛇劫起) have both yielded RMB 100 million in the box office and got positive reviews, succeeding commercially and by word of mouth. CGGE had the opportunity to get a chance to talk to Wong about his story in the animation industry and his passion and persistence as an animator.

CGGE: Can you start with a brief introduction of your personal experience and how you came to be an animation producer?

Wong: This story is a bit long. When I was in college, I studied animation software, but there was no animation major at that time, and I didn't know much about animation.

After working with software for a long time, I felt a bit bored; always typing code makes me feel quite bored. At that time, a Hong Kong company called Imagi Production was hiring animation apprentices, and for some reason, I wanted to find out more about it, so I applied. After seven days of training, they selected and hired about ten people out of 300, and I was one of them. I can say it was not easy.

That's how I joined Imagi and was assigned to the animation team. The salary was very low, only enough to support my basic living, and the work was toilsome and the intensity was not low. Despite that, I thought it was fun to do animation, so I persevered.

The first project I worked on was the 3D CG animated TV series *Zentrix (2002-2004)* (時空冒險記), a series released worldwide and won many

awards. Later on, I worked on the first CG animated TV series that was in the US during prime time *Father of the Pride (2004-2005)* (獅王的榮耀) for Dreamworks. Later, I worked on the animated movie *Astro Boy (2009)* (小飛俠阿童木), but because of the failure of the movie at the box office, the company lost a lot of money and went into liquidation. I was a bit confused: I have been in the industry for almost 10 years, where is the way forward?



Should I change my career path or stick to it? It's too difficult to make animated movies and the salary is not high, should I make more money while I'm young or stick to the industry? I like animation very much, and although it is painstaking, I enjoy the feeling of the moment when the movie comes out, so I decided to continue to work in the animation industry.

At that time, many colleagues went to Singapore, Japan, the United States, and Canada, and I could have chosen to go to Taiwan or Japan; anyway, I needed to leave Hong Kong. In the end, I decided to go to the Mainland.

At that time, the animation industry in the Mainland was mainly for subcontracting and outsourcing, and there were very few opportunities for original work. Many people were not optimistic about originality in the Mainland, but I thought it might be an opportunity, so I decided to take a path that no one was willing to take.

My first working city in the Mainland was Xiamen, where I stayed for three years, mainly involved in the production of some overseas TV dramas, such as Warner Brothers' *Green Lantern (2011)* (綠燈俠) and an animated film about Vikings. I learned a lot from the overseas directors there and became familiar with the working style of my mainland counterparts, including the management style. Slowly, I transitioned from being an artist to a manager. However, I still had the dream of making animated films at that time. Animation films are different from TV animation films in terms of quality and audiences' visual experience. At that time, I heard from a friend that a new company was established in Beijing to make original animated films, so I went there for an interview.

The company was Light Chaser Animation, and the owner, Wang Wei, and I had a long chat. At that time, there were not many bosses who were willing to do original animation films, and our thoughts were very compatible, so I joined the team.

All in all, I have persevered until now because I like animation, because I am truly interested in it.

CGGE: As a Hong Kong director who is the Beijing 'drifter', you have experienced the re-emergence of Chinese animation films and even played a very important role in it. Could you share your thoughts on this?

Wong: In this industry, I started as an animator, not knowing anything, in the beginning, to skillfully producing animations and eventually becoming an animation director. I learned to manage the team and communicate with the director, and then I created my work and became the project manager and director. Step by step, it was a long road, and it took a long time, but I clearly understand the needs of each position and the ideas of everyone. This is very important for managers. The completion of a film usually requires the participation of 300-400 people, each with a different level of involvement, and we must learn to work together. It's both an artistic and a humanistic task, and we need to know how to work together to accomplish this difficult task.

As a director, I can't do everything, so I have to trust my team and encourage them to do their best for the project, polishing the work and presenting the story without regrets. Each position is different, so I have to give my colleagues the utmost trust and believe that they are the best. Only in this way can we make a film without so many regrets.

Up to now, in fact, there are still very few domestic original animation films in China, and outsourcing is the main business, but in the past few years, the industry has been slowly developing For more than 10 years, no one has told us how the industry is going. Should we learn from Hollywood? Must foreign methods be good? Or should we use our own methods? The steps are the results of the works of our predecessors who tried, fell, and corrected the errors. Chinese animation films face a very difficult environment, we are still in the process of figuring out and moving forward.

The animated film is really different from the live-action film, it relies on technology, art, and human management. Technology requires the use of computer software, and



artistry should be taken into account in the process. Lastly, management of various talents is important as well. The investment in an animated film is very high, with little time, and little budget, which is often uncontrollable. Therefore, these three aspects are very important to produce good work.

CGGE: Among your works, which ones are you satisfied with? How do you express your innermost feelings through animation?

Wong: There are still many shortcomings and regrets in the works I have participated in Frankly speaking, we must feel that there is a gap between our films and the top-notch animated films, I think now our films have been recognized by the audience due to their tolerance and support. There is still a lot of room for us to improve.

If I had to give an example, it would be *White Snake*. The fact that the film was well received by the audience shows that traditional Chinese culture is a good direction for the industry. And that the audience is interested in this kind of subject. This is a very good encouragement for us creators.

In the past, our original works were all family stories that were not very relevant to the audience, but after the release of *White Snake*, it seems that



we have opened a door to connect the story with the audience. At the same time, traditional mythological stories are suitable for animation because the latter can give full play to the imagination and create fantasy content, which is an advantage compared to live-action movies.

Moreover, the core of the traditional story is the spirit of Chinese culture, and we can make the audience understand it without expressing it deliberately, which is also different from foreign animated films. The technologies of foreign countries are indeed better than ours when they use our Chinese culture as the subject, but our Chinese companies have an advantage in understanding the inner core of the story. This area has a lot of room for development.

CGGE: You have worked in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, etc. Can you share the different feelings about working in these places? Do you think each of these places has its characteristics in terms of industry development?

Wong: I have worked in many cities in the Mainland, and each city gives me a different feeling.

Xiamen is the city I like, a very simple and unpretentious city in the south, with a lot of young people from different places gathering there. Many good companies are developing different projects, and many experienced people can lead newcomers to the industry to participate in projects of different scales. Life in Xiamen is not too stressful, which allows creators to immerse themselves in their projects without distractions.

Beijing is recognized as the city with the highest concentration of film and television talent, with a large pool of high-end talent. Beijing is also very convenient, with a rich cultural heritage and a very good environment for cultural creation. Beijing also has a lot of opportunities for projects and exchanges between high-end talents in the arts.

Shanghai and Hangzhou mainly focus on the development of games. If Beijing represents stability, then Shanghai

and Hangzhou represent speed. Fast rhythm, leads to fast change. Beijing will polish you, Shanghai and Hangzhou will present you with flexibility and dynamism and will be more active and sensitive in market response. Shanghai, in particular, is fast in accepting foreign cultures. There is a lot of Chinese and foreign mix of things, not just purely traditional Chinese culture. Shanghai has the freshest and most current cultural content, you can see the most popular things abroad in Shanghai If you are looking for Chinese cultural roots, Beijing is still better, while Shanghai is a little more inspired by overseas culture.

CGGE: Can you tell us your views and visions on the future development of animation in China? Do you have anything to tell the young generation who want to enter this industry in the future?

Wong: I think that in the past five to ten years, Chinese animation has been in a stage of rapid development, both in terms of talent and original content. The market demand for

Chinese themes is higher than that of overseas animation. I think we have a good opportunity. I believe that this demand can support our artists. The Hong Kong market is far too small, and the related industry in China is growing exponentially and is very large. I've been in the industry for 20 years, and the last 10 years have been the best.

There are also challenges. The audience's appetite is getting more and more sophisticated, and they have higher and higher demands for animated films. But they are still very tolerant of us, giving us room for continuous growth. We need to explore more content, improve our technical skills, and polish our artistic effects to meet their needs.

However, the foundation of this industry is not yet stable. Japan and the United States have a very systematic and comprehensive training of talents, while our practitioners, the animation work for most of them are labors of love, purely persevering due to their interests. There is no methodology or mentorship for

newcomers, the only way is to work hard. But just relying on love and hard work is not sustainable, we still need to consider how to systematically cultivate talent, to allow the healthy development of the industry. Do not hope to achieve success instantly. After all, our industry started much later than foreign countries, we need to take one step at a time and take every step practically.

I hope the audience gives the industry some patience so that we can accumulate experience slowly. In this industry, technology, art, and people are indispensable. Not throwing money into the industry can immediately improve it, we also need to improve through film creation, and we need a healthy development mechanism.

In life, to find a job you like and stick to it is a meaningful thing in itself. Not only the animation industry but also other industries. I have been in the industry for more than 20 years, other people might think I am miserable, but I think the happiest place is that although the work is hard, I like it.

Some people may say, find a job (to make money), even if you don't like it particularly, and then do animation when you have the time. My opinion is that life is very short, and it is very rare to find your hobby in work and keep pursuing improvement. In addition, the living standard of everyone is now very good. In the past, we were under great financial pressure while working because we had to sustain our material lives. But now that the standard of living has improved and it is not as difficult as before for the whole industry, I hope that young enthusiasts can join us and persevere and go further so that their works can be presented on the big screen and be recognized by the audience, and we can all gain a sense of accomplishment in life.

I will commit to helping young people who want to join the industry, together with likeminded, experienced professionals in the industry.



AEROLITE TECHNOLOGY

THE SMALL TEAM WHO ENVISIONS A FUTURE OF BIG CHANGES



BY: SOPHIA ZHU

Chongqing Aerolite Technology Company (“Aerolite Technology”) is an independent game development company founded in Chongqing, the largest industrial and commercial city in Southwest China. Chongqing has a long history, and its people are resilient, open and tolerant. These characteristics are deeply engraved in the entrepreneurial spirit of Aerolite. Since its establishment, Aerolite has been exploring and innovating, striving for technical excellence and pursuing artistic uniqueness. We interviewed Mr Pengkun Li, the founder of Aerolite Technology, to learn more about the story behind the company.

CGGE: Can you tell us how Aerolite Technology started?

Li: It started with Global Digital Creations (GDC Technology). At that time, I was more interested in animation, so I joined GDC and

participated in the production and development of the first full CG animation film in China. Three years later, I found that I was more interested in games, so I joined the game industry and participated in the development of many large-scale 3D online games. In fact, I have been in the game industry for more than 10 years, and around 2015, I got involved in VR development. At that time, the VR industry was still at a very early stage in China, but people were generally very optimistic about its prospects and thought it might be a future trend. We used VR technology to try to make some big online adventure games and other kinds of games and sold them on Steam.

In terms of content development, Aerolite has moved relatively fast, but our hardware development is still at a very early stage, and we have tried some VR peripherals and assistive devices, but none of them are satisfactory. Experience tells us that the



maturity of the VR industry counts on the maturity of hardware.

In 2014, Facebook acquired Oculus and launched their version of the metaverse in preparation for the future of social lives. We believe that the metaverse is still a very far-to-reach concept, and the Internet still needs some more practical applications at this stage. In this situation, we started to consider transforming into a mobile game development company. In about 2018, we officially entered the field of handheld game development.

We have produced several casual games and sandbox survival games, one of which is called *Icefield Guardian* (冰原守护者), whose test version is very popular both overseas and domestically and got Aerolite a domestic ICG investment. It was released in October 2021 in China, but it is not yet available overseas, and the feedback and market data it received in China are quite good.



CGGE: What makes Aerolite Technology's work so special?

Li: For me, I like to try new technologies, and as a team, we are a company that likes to be at the forefront of technology. We are one of the first companies in China to use large 3D engines, such as Unreal Engine and Unity. We are also the earliest company to work with VR. We want to keep trying to develop projects with new technologies but mainly focus on 3D. We hope to use technology to assist and to present artworks with personality. Our work is more niche, more independent, and gameplay-oriented, rather than commercialized. We prefer to develop interesting games so that players can experience the fun of playing games.

CGGE: How would you summarize the personality and company culture of Aerolite Technology?

Li: Our company is characterized by developing interesting games for global users, and that is our goal as well. More specifically, we focus on strengthening our competitiveness in the subsectors, and we have a flat management style. We work hard to make a better product and let players have fun.



CGGE: What are the highlights of Aerolite Technology's development in the past few years?

Li: First of all, in terms of arts and crafts, our products are very unique and can attract different players, which is very special compared to a large number of games with the same style in the market. This uniqueness allows us to attract more players and publishers. Secondly, in the development of the product, we tried to inject the company features into the product's creativity and gameplay to make it as different as

possible from other games.

I remember when we were developing VR products, our product won the top 10 in a national competition held by Microsoft. When we were developing games, our products were recommended on the first page of the Apple App Store and the Store's game leaderboard. It is because of the innovation and uniqueness of these games that they received these recommendations, which gave our team great encouragement.

CGGE: As the pandemic continues, what do you see as the challenges ahead for the company?

Li: Yes, the pandemic hit all companies, not just the ones who do production. The global economy, especially the Internet economy, is showing signs of recession. Many Internet companies are laying off staff, game publishers are scaling back on product promotion and distribution, and game revenues are starting to drop.

Our production team has recently started working from home again, and game development is still going on, and whether we can survive in the next one to two years is the biggest key challenge. In any case, we still have to make products with characteristics from time to time. These are the challenges we are facing now.

CGGE: What other high-tech entertainment products will you provide for players in the future?

Li: We hope to develop freer sandbox open-world games based on our existing products and keep improving the gameplay of our products. Open-world sandbox games are a new trend in recent years, and everyone is exploring this field now. Many large companies are also developing such



games. Compared with us, they have a stronger development team and more funding, but it doesn't mean that small companies don't have a chance.

The reality is that both large and small companies are on the same starting line, and the future still depends on the vision of each company regarding product development and innovation. So, I think we still have a chance, and we will continue to work hard in this area and keep experimenting with different gameplay and content

in sandbox games. At the same time, we also need to maintain frequent communication and interaction with players and the community to collect opinions, so as to constantly adjust the direction of the product. The advantage of a small team is that it is more flexible, faster paced, and easier to adjust, and we will continue to take advantage of this.



GUANGZHOU YI ANIMATION COMMUNICATION CO., LTD. AN INNOVATIVE AND EXPLORATORY ANIMATION BOUTIQUE

BY: SOPHIA ZHU

“**I** *Am What I Am* (2021) is an animated comedy film by Sun Haipeng based on real events, produced by Zhang Miao and co-produced by Beijing Cheering Times Culture & Entertainment, Guangzhou Yi Animation Communication Co., Ltd, Mokexing Film and Beijing Hualu Baina Film & Tv Inc. The film was released nationwide on December 17th, 2021. On its premiere screening earlier this month, the film achieved consistently high critical reviews and scored 8.3 on Douban, earning a whopping 249 million RMB at the Chinese box office.

The film tells the story of left-behind teenager Juan. After being encouraged by a girl of the same name whom he met by chance one day, he made up his mind to break the shackles of reality and fight for his own dignity with his friends Mao and Gou, forming a lion dance team. The three characters support each other, stumbling along the way, to finally create a miracle in realizing their dreams, telling a passionate and hilarious story of growth.

Today, a year after its premiere, CGGE invites Mr. Cheng Haiming from Yi Animation to share a behind-the-scenes view of the film.

CGGE: As a professional animation

company that has been deeply involved in China's animation industry for so many years, could you give us an insight into the company's history?

Cheng: The company was founded in 2013, and it has been 8 years now. From 2013-2015, we mainly produced two TV animation shows for children - *Kungfood* (2014-) and *NeoBear Dream Town* (2016-2017). In 2014, we signed memorandums of cooperation with two Hollywood companies, Twentieth Century Fox and Sony Columbia, to collaborate in developing films. From the third year of the company's establishment, we transitioned to film production. But our first project was rather unpolished, and because we cooperated with Hollywood, we

hesitated in deciding whether we would be facing the domestic or international market. We hoped to be positioned in both markets.

The movie *Kung Food (2018)* scored above 8 on both Douban and Maoyan, but due to the influence of Disney's acquisition of Fox, its overseas distribution was not smooth. Two years later, in 2018, the film was released for the first time, and the result was not satisfactory. Although it was arranged again to screen around National Day in 2019, since it was the second round of release, there weren't as many sessions as expected.

In 2019, together with Beijing Cheering Times Culture & Entertainment, we planned the animated film *I Am What I Am* and completed the production in two years. At present, the film has been screened for several rounds and won a good reputation. The film scored 8.3 on Douban; and 9.5 on Maoyan; received a 95% Recommendation Rate on Weibo's Big V; ranked second on Weibo's Domestic Films recommendation leaderboard of the year, and landed sixth place in the Global Films category. *I Am What I Am* has been widely recognized by film critics and movie audiences. We feel that the audience is very welcoming to domestic animation.

CGGE: If you were to sum up the personality and company culture of Yi Animation, what would it be?

Cheng: "China-Chic"! (aka Xin Guo Chao) We all know the traditional saying: "Eat in Guangzhou; Shunde's gourmet food is the best in the world", which inspired the production of *Kung Food*; *I Am What I Am* describes the culture of Foshan. Our company is in Guangzhou, and we hope to produce movies that resonate with the current generation's youth, and that describe traditional classic culture in their language. During our discussion of the topic selection with the producer, we talked about culture and decided on "China-Chic" as a keyword. This is what we have emphasized in all the works we developed in the past. Whether it is gourmet food or lion dance, they are all particularly classic "chic" themes in Chinese culture. Using new technologies, new ideas,



and a vernacular context adopted by the youth, we delivered a new interpretation of traditional classic culture.

There is also the term "Youth Spirit" which, like "China-Chic", is the core idea of our production and the central message our work wishes to deliver.

CGGE: *I Am What I Am* has strong Cantonese cultural characteristics. Where did you draw inspiration from? Was it related to your personal experience?

Cheng: Director Sun Haipeng and I are both new Guangzhou natives. We have lived in Guangzhou for more than ten years. We feel that only a story close to life can move the audience and gain their recognition. Many of

the topics selected by Director Sun are derived from his personal experiences. For example, Guangdong festivals, new store opening celebrations, as well as lion dances can be commonly seen everywhere.

CGGE: Were there any particular challenges within the production that you and your team had to overcome? Or any particular highlights?

Cheng: The most common feedback from the audience is that it looks more like a live-action movie than animation. The scenes, environment, lion fur, tassels of lion dance costumes, etc. all look very realistic. Biological characteristics simulation has always been a difficult task in animation production. How to achieve vividness and "deceive" the eyes of the audience

is very challenging. We have made a breakthrough on this in the movie, including convincing light and shadow effects, natural vegetation, plants (especially the kapok that is found in Lingnan), as well as rich sunsets, and natural scenery like the blue skies and white clouds, all of which are very delicate and beautiful. These all stem from careful observation and sampling from our own lives.

After watching the movie, the local Guangzhou audience felt that the environments of Liwan Lake Park, the Aquatic Products Building, and other landmark buildings, including the environment of the Zhujiang New Town under construction in 2005, as well as Huanshi Road, Fangcun Avenue, Haizhu Notary Office, and Jiahewanggang Station, were akin to photographic restorations of Guangzhou urban landscapes. We indeed replicated landscapes on an almost 1:1 scale. There were also rural scenes taken from Foshan villages. The posters and graffiti on the walls were purposely very detailed. All these make the audience believe that the story told happened around us. After watching the movie, many audience members forgot that this is a work of animation. For the first time, we used technology to break the boundary between animated movies and live-action movies.

It takes a large number of assets to achieve this effect. During peak post-production, a render farm with 4,000 52-core clusters was used,

which is equivalent to the computation capacity of 200,000 CPUs. The core database assets reached 140 TB. Under normal circumstances, the average asset volume of an animated movie is about 30-40 TB, so our movie is equivalent to the asset volume of 3-4 animated movies. The data capacity and lens complexity are unprecedented. When we transmitted data remotely to Ruiyun Farm and Tencent Farm, we used 3 optical fibers, and it took 5 days and 5 nights to complete the data synchronization. The amount of data was so huge that the core equipment of the rendering farm was once overloaded. This is a rare incident in cloud computing processes in the movie industry.

One of the most complicated scenes is when the hero practices lion-dancing alone on the rooftop, facing the Zhujiang New Town. The rising sun shines through the gaps of skyscrapers onto the screen, tracing the thin yet determined frame of the male protagonist. This big panoramic shot is composed only of a total of 200 frames, yet it took 10 hours to calculate each frame. For a scene lasting less than 10 seconds, it took almost a week to complete this large number of calculations.

Another time-consuming scene involving massive amounts of calculations shows lion fur. In that scene, 100 lions are dancing together in the finals. Over a thousand spectators are also in the scene. Each lion's head is composed of several million strands,

and collision physics between the fur and fabric of the lion heads and tails also needs to be calculated. Needless to say, all necessary calculations in that scene broke records in the CG animation industry.

CGGE: What do you expect the audience to gain from the movie?

Cheng: What we most often hear from the audience, is that around halfway through, they have already gotten fully immersed in the movie. In the latter half of the film, most would discover tears welling in their eyes, and the entire audience would be swept with empathy. Everyone tends to forget that this is just an animated movie.

They are unconsciously brought into the film's world by the realistic environment, believing wholeheartedly that this is Guangzhou, this is Foshan, and relate personally to everything the hero experiences.

Everyone seems to have returned to their youth, that is 2005, when the story in the movie took place. They would look back on their days as 18-year-olds, recalling forgotten dreams, teenage troubles, and the hardships of growing up. In this process of growing up, every ordinary person has to undergo challenges, face adversities, and learn how to break free from the prejudice of others.

We are telling the stories of ordinary people. The hero, heroine, and their friends, even their names, are all very





down-to-earth. Each character's image recalls the fat and thin acquaintances in everyone's memory. Our hero first appeared before us thin as a girl, easily misunderstood and bullied by others. What we see in this movie is just a snapshot of the world we are living in.

In particular, the theme song "Nobody" sung by Mao Buyi at the end of the movie is a soothing relief to the bittersweet tears shed by the audience after experiencing their passionate youth once more. They deeply realize that this movie is made for ordinary people who work hard to live.

Life is not easy, there are good times and bad times. Our film wishes to arouse ordinary people's love for life, remember dreams, and friendships, and learn to face life's difficulties head-on like the protagonist.

We have spent a lot of effort in the emotional expression of characters, such as Master "Salted Fish" Qiang in the film who also gave up his dreams for familial responsibilities. However, when the children come to seek his help in lion dancing, his youthful dream regarding lion dance is rekindled. These are the lives that middle-aged and young people are experiencing right now.

We are very pleased that the audience resonated with the emotions we expressed through our characters. We hope that when our audience leaves the theatre, they can wipe off their tears, and muster the courage to challenge life's unfairness and learn to face their troubles with a smile. This is what makes us, as filmmakers, particularly happy.

CGGE: We've been through a whirlwind over the last few months in 2021. Do you feel that there has been a shift in the Chinese animation industrial landscape at all? What's your opinion on the domestic animation market?

Cheng: I hope everyone can see the positive side of this. At present, in the Chinese market, whether it is animation or live-action, there is already a good audience foundation for movie-watching. The audience is very willing to tolerate and accept

productions as long as they see the creators' sincerity and effort in the story.

For creators, this is a very fortunate thing. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, the box office in 2020 still exceeded 20.4 billion RMB. I think, as the epidemic slowly subsides, by next year we will gradually return to the peak of nearly 70 billion RMB in 2019.

Although the economy is facing many challenges, the audience has never stopped looking for good movies to help them through life's hardships. As such, the overall domestic film market continues to grow. Movie audiences still have a great demand for movies, and their appreciation abilities are becoming more mature. They can accept and appreciate movies of different genres and themes, whether they are of the commercial genre, science fiction films, or animation. They all have a passion for watching movies.

The domestic animation film market is at a stage where creative seeds continue to blossom. Whether it's *Monkey King: Hero is Back* (2015), *Big Fish and Begonia* (2016), *Ne Zha* (2019), *White Snake* (2019), or *I Am What I Am*; whether it is a historical drama, fantasy, traditional IP production, or realistic film, the audience can discover highlights in every genre.

Our film is not an IP adaptation, nor does it include famous stars in its cast. We just want to try making a film that focuses on the people around us, the ordinary people, the grassroots workers, and the struggles in everyday life, and see if people can be touched by a movie like this.

From the film's current reputation, this attempt and challenge was a success. But frankly speaking, we did indeed choose a difficult path. From a commercial point of view, this was a very risky project.

To achieve good market returns, the best way is to adapt and remake old IPs, such as the Four Classics, and classical myths such as *Shanhaijing*. However, our Director Sun, and the team decided to make bold attempts and make innovations in genre.



So far, this challenge has proved worthwhile. From film critics to professional audiences, everyone is actively encouraging us to further expand the possibilities of animation. In response to the audience's comments, Director Sun said that he hopes to remove the "animation" label from animated films because animation as a medium can be used to explore a lot of genres. China has a large audience base, so we can afford to experiment with genre innovation.

CGGE: Are there any marked goals or plans for growth you can tell us about for Yi Animation?

Cheng: We already have some things planned with the producers of Beijing Cheering Times Culture & Entertainment and Hualu Baina. In their 2021 Annual Report, Hualu Baina announced the Chinese Youth Universe. In the next 5 years from 2021 to 2025, there will be a total of five new movie series aimed at juveniles, including *I Am What I Am 2*, and other new productions such as *Sword Casting Youth* and *Sun Chasing Youth*.

We are all constantly innovating. *I Am What I Am* is a realistic movie, *Sword*

Casting Youth is a historical martial arts film, and *Sun Chasing Youth* is a sci-fi movie. We hope to challenge these three genres with bold innovations through this three-part series for teenagers. These are rarely explored in mainstream animation movies and show the determination and confidence of our creative team.

We want to show Chinese movie viewers, what Chinese youth of today look like - that is, the modern *I Am What I Am*, the historical *Sword Casting Youth*, and the futuristic *Sun Chasing Youth*. This is our goal for the next five years. I hope everyone can see our determination and confidence.

This series of productions shall always revolve around ordinary people who have youthful dreams in China today, resonating with every ordinary member of the audience. As the Producer and CEO of Beijing Cheering Times Culture & Entertainment, Mr. Zhang Miao has said, applaud the youth, crown the ordinary, and sing praise to every ordinary person, protect their dreams, friendship, and quotidian lives.

LIGHT UP THE FUTURE!

INTERVIEW WITH SHANGHAI MOTION MAGIC DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT INC.



BY: SOPHIA ZHU

Founded in 2000, Shanghai Motion Magic Digital Entertainment Inc. (“Motion Magic”), is a holding company under Shanghai Culture Radio & Film Group Co., LTD. (“SMG”) and a leading digital content service provider in China. During the past 20 years of development, Motion Magic has been adhering to the spirit of craftsmanship, with the concept of technology empowering creativity. Motion Magic’s business covers animation, digital film, and television, digital cultural tourism, and exhibition. Particularly in animation, in the rising tide of Chinese animation (“Guo Man”) these few years, Motion Magic acted as producer of the popular *Fights Break Sphere* (

鬥破蒼穹) series, signature franchises like *Martial Universe* (2011-2013) and *Thousand Autumns* (2021) as well as *Kingsglave: Final Fantasy XV* (2016) which brought them great attention from the industry. CGGE invited Mr. Guo Xiang, the head of Motion Magic’s CG Animation Department, to discuss the great production team behind these excellent works.

CGGE: As an animation company that has been in the industry for dozens of years, could you give us an insight into the company’s history?

Guo: The animation production team of Motion Magic was established in 2003. It entered the animation market through the development of original content for children and positioned itself as Pixar in China. Its works

include *Zui Hua Yuan* (2002), *Salad English Park* (2007), *Xiao Gui Bie Dong Dui* (2006), and other projects. At the time, even though the market was not yet developed, the team gained some prestige through these projects. Due to the immaturity of the market, the monetization channels of original animation were too scarce, and these animation works could only be broadcast through TV channels. Though the audience rating is not low and the audience gave good responses to the projects, the operation team still failed to obtain satisfactory income.

Given this situation, Motion Magic turned its perspective to the international market. With the support of SMG and its domestic distribution team, the company participated in the production of international

projects such as *Chuggington* (2008-), *MuMu&Me* (2008-2009) and *What’s the Big Idea* (2013). With these projects, the team recognized their shortcomings and grew from a team with a dozen employees to a hundred people; the production pipeline was also developed. In 2009, Motion Magic replicated its experience in game production, like *Eidos Studio’s Kane Lynch* (2007) and *Mini Ninjas* (2009), which were both successful. It kickstarted the high-level production of CG in China. The experience of high-quality projects brought forth the opportunity to participate in the production of the top international IP *Final Fantasy* in 2016, which is also the highest-grade and most international project produced by the team so far.

Subsequently, due to the increase of domestic production costs, the overseas business has been greatly reduced. At the same time, the rise of Guo Man has ushered in new opportunities for the team’s development and transformation. Our team no longer confined ourselves to CG production but upgraded from production to creation. Therefore, we formed the pre-production team including the screenwriter, director, and concept artists, and gradually went on to form the full pipeline for IP production. With the continuous development of Guo Man, Motion Magic also expanded its pipeline and supply system. Besides Shanghai, we have successively established production teams in Changsha, Dalian, Luoyang, and other places. We are gradually building our production system around the self-developed pipeline control platform, which also brought us popular projects like *Fights Break Sphere* and *Martial Universe*.

CGGE: If you were to sum up the personality and company culture of working at Motion Magic, what would it be?

Guo: “Lighting up the future with creativity” and “Enabling creation with science and technology” have always been the vision and slogans of Motion Magic. The team’s spirit is to continuously improve projects and stick to a pragmatic and rigorous working style. Therefore, I think “enterprising”



and “hardworking” are the two keywords that best represent Motion Magic’s culture in my mind. This culture is also born out of SMG, and can even be traced back to the period of traditional TV business. We should not make empty talk, but see ourselves clearly and strive to surpass ourselves constantly. It is also because of our long-term adherence to this spirit that Motion Magic occupies a place in the ever-changing market for a long time.

CGGE: As an established animation company with a reputation for quality and creativity, how does this translate into your business model?

Guo: Although we are an established animation company, we rely on quality and creativity to stay relevant in the

ever-changing content market.

The following three representative projects are the best examples of our pursuit of excellence.

1. *Chuggington* can be regarded as the most successful and longest-lived overseas children’s show processed in China. From 2006 to 2020, more than 3000 minutes of content has been completed and broadcasted all over the world.
2. The relationship between the *Kingsglave: Final Fantasy XV* movie and Motion Magic originated from Motion Magic’s successful participation in several game CG projects of Eidos Studio since 2010. After SquareEnix acquired Eidos, it was logical for Motion Magic to



receive the largest collaboration contract for the Final Fantasy movie in China.

3. For the *Fights Break Sphere* animation series, although Motion Magic took over the project from the second season, we still created several seasons and specials for the project and made the *Fights Break Sphere* animation series into a veritable top streaming IP in China.

CGGE: How do you organize production with back-to-back projects that are sometimes developed in parallel? How is the staff organized around these projects?

Guo: Animation is more complex than it looks. It not only inherits a large number of production processes from pre-production to the middle-stage and post-production but also aggravates the complexity and uncertainty of production and creation due to the diverse preferences of users and highly intensive production resources.

As we deal with new challenges resulting from increasing orders by the year, apart from continuing to expand in production capacity, Motion Magic focuses on using a highly integrated and standardized customization pipeline to achieve the centralized development of multiple projects.

Most experience comes from a large number of overseas top production teams who have cooperated with us. Whether it's the integration of self-developed tools, the synchronization backup and exchange of daily big data, or even real-time remote quality audit and budget progress monitoring, we can achieve it with a complete set of mechanisms. Numerous self-developed products have also made us one of the teams with the most copyright and patent development in related fields in China. Such an assembly pipeline not only greatly guarantees the stability and efficiency of production, but also improves the team's ability to manage several concurrent projects.

CGGE: How is Motion Magic working to promote greater diversity and

inclusion within teams?

Guo: As mentioned above, the team is always striving for progress, pursuing diversity and uniqueness of content. Especially in today's increasingly serious homogenization and involution of projects, unique and diverse works are highly scarce in the market. Studios need to invest a lot of energy to polish great works.

In *Fights Break Sphere*, recalling our experience in overseas productions and distributions, we produced this top original IP into two products: regular anime and special anime. The former better adhered to the original plot, and attracted fans of the original work with regular updates; the latter is more like a movie version, using

high-quality animation to explore extra story content or famous scenes, helping the plot to be better realized. During the past four years, we have finished over a thousand minutes of the regular series and three special series, which made *Fights Break Sphere* different from other IPs in the market. This also encouraged more and more other IPs to release special series. The combination of "fast-food" series and boutique drama has also continuously improved the overall content quality of Guo Man, making the market prosperous.

CGGE: With the rise of China's national animation, Motion Magic plays an important role in it. Your production of *Fights Break Sphere* is the best in China. In particular, *Fights Break the Sphere: Three-Years of the Covenant (2021)* has only been online for a few days and already has more than one billion views. This is so exciting. So how did you start working on it?

Guo: *Fights Break Sphere: Three-Years of the Covenant* can be regarded as a work that the team has paid the most attention to in recent years.

This is not only because the story covers a lot of famous scenes, but also because the whole team regards it as a concentrated display and report of their achievements since 2016. We hope that through this work, we will repay the vast number of fans' recognition and love of it.

In retrospect, as early as 2016 when China Literature Group (Yue Wen) brought *Fights Break Sphere* to us, we still operated mainly in the overseas market and provided services. At the very beginning, we are like a little child, curious and lacking experience. However, with the introduction of the project and its production, the team developed pre-production capabilities and accumulated the experience from the past dozen years to gradually form a leading domestic production team. With the broadcasting of every series of *Fights Break Sphere*, we also gradually realized the huge consumer market as well as the influence of a big IP with a huge number of fans. We hold the spirit to respect the market and the IP to produce good works. In the fifth year of production, we produced *Fights Break*

Sphere: Three-Years of the Covenant, for the fans and every team member of Motion Magic who worked on it, to thank them for their perseverance and love.

CGGE: Do you have any favorite projects/milestones that Motion Magic has worked on/achieved over the years?

Guo: In the past few years, the team has focused on lengthy videos of animation shows that cover a variety of fields and themes. We explore the content market through different topics. Whether it's *Final Fantasy*, *Fights Break Sphere*, *Thousand Autumns*, *Chuggington*, and so on, we keep the attitude to produce the work as the milestone project in that category. I am also proud that Motion Magic can produce these distinctive works for the market.

CGGE: How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the company?
Guo: As a veteran content company that has been operating in the Chinese market for many years,





the Motion Magic brand not only guarantees quality but also includes implementation stability and safety guarantees. We have done enough to respond to the pandemic to minimize the impact as much as possible. According to our incomplete statistics, we were one of the few domestic production companies that managed to return to work punctually. Rarely, such a large-scale team facing the huge dilemma of a worldwide epidemic can resume work efficiently. Such resource integration and scheduling capabilities have also helped us complete several large overseas projects on time; and helped us win great appreciation from customers.

CGGE: Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the landscape of the animation industry as well?

Guo: The impact of the epidemic on the animation industry has been all-encompassing:

1. A significant reduction in animated films and an increasing amount of web-based animation and online content, while production execution requirements are becoming more and more demanding as audience demand for content continues to grow and escalate.
2. The frequency of working from home becomes higher, advancing the

demand of enterprises for remote collaboration and the off-site office is rising, for a variety of cloud-based technology services there is more customized demand.

3. The composition of the team and the distribution model of talent is changing. Large teams in charge of the full process are decreasing, and small and medium-sized teams are increasing and becoming more flexible. The cooperation between teams is also becoming more diversified, and flexible, and the cooperation boundary between companies is becoming smaller and more integrated.

CGGE: Are there any marked goals or plans for growth you can tell us about Motion Magic?

Guo: At present, the business of Motion Magic mainly focuses on animation, digital cultural travel and exhibition, and digital film and television. During the 20 years since the development of the company, Motion Magic has accumulated industry experience and talent reserve serving all walks of life and various types of content. At the same time, after the reform in recent years, our team, which grew in the era of traditional TV, has successfully realized the transformation of multiple content fields. No matter what aspect of the business, a large number of innovative

and creative technology and cultural integration fields need to be involved.

We hope to enable the company to grow larger and faster, striving for an IPO. On the other hand, we will focus on enhancing the development of self-researched content, actively embrace the “cliquish culture” and the Generation Z audience, achieve further development through IP with original animation, break out of the animation field, lead national innovation and national trends, deliver offline experience, and other aspects. We wish to combine online content with offline cultural traveling experiences to create a more interesting service pipeline. On the other hand, in this constantly evolving market, we must also strengthen close cooperation with various platforms. Changes in platform strategies and policies will have a huge impact on our entire entertainment industry. We believe that in the future, only teams that can create fresh content can gain more room for expansion, and we shall strive to make Motion Magic stand out and make a big splash in the market.

Finally, I wish for Motion Magic to continue developing, achieve our goals, and sustainably expand!

AFRIKA TOON FROM A HEALTH CRISIS TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

BY: SOPHIA ZHU

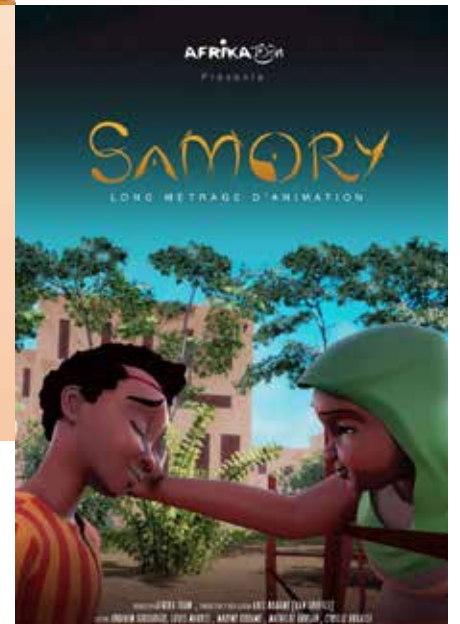
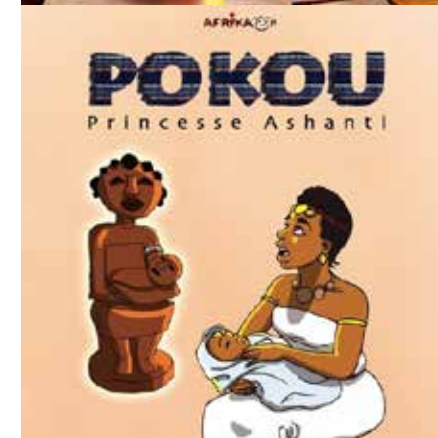
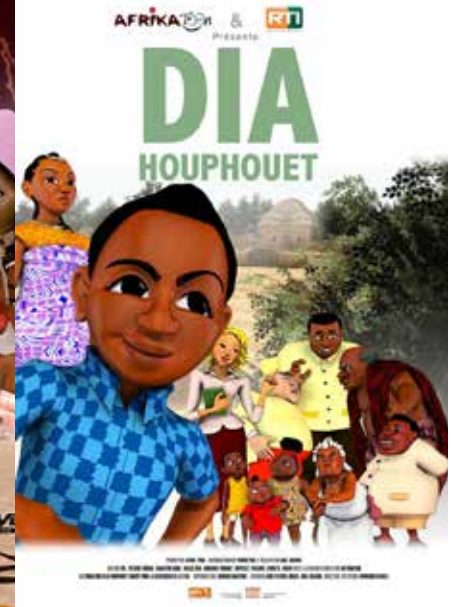
Founded in 2005 by Abel Kouamé (Kan Souffle) and a group of friends with a passion for animation, Afrika Toon is one of the most influential studios in Africa, excelling in the production of 2D and 3D content. It is positioned in a booming African market that is now receiving attention from global industry giants. According to a report by the research firm IMARC, the African animation industry is expected to generate an average annual growth rate of 8.2% during the period 2022 to 2027.

Like all actors in the global film industry, the studio has not escaped the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This challenge materialized in the closure of borders, as the studio barely opened its offices in Annecy, reducing the scope of interaction between its employees to telecommuting. However, Afrika Toon was able to stay the course thanks to several factors, the most essential of which were proactivity and hard work.

These efforts are noticeable from their digital presence. Their web audience has steadily grown, now boasting a YouTube channel with nearly 1,500,000 subscribers.

It was during this crisis that Afrika Toon produced EKOVA (2019), its 5th animated feature film, which won awards at several international festivals. Among these awards, are Best Independent Film at the Vegas Movie Awards and Best Animated Feature at the South Film and Arts Academy Festival (SFAAF) in Chile.

Today, Afrika Toon is keeping its ambitions in sight and plans to provide



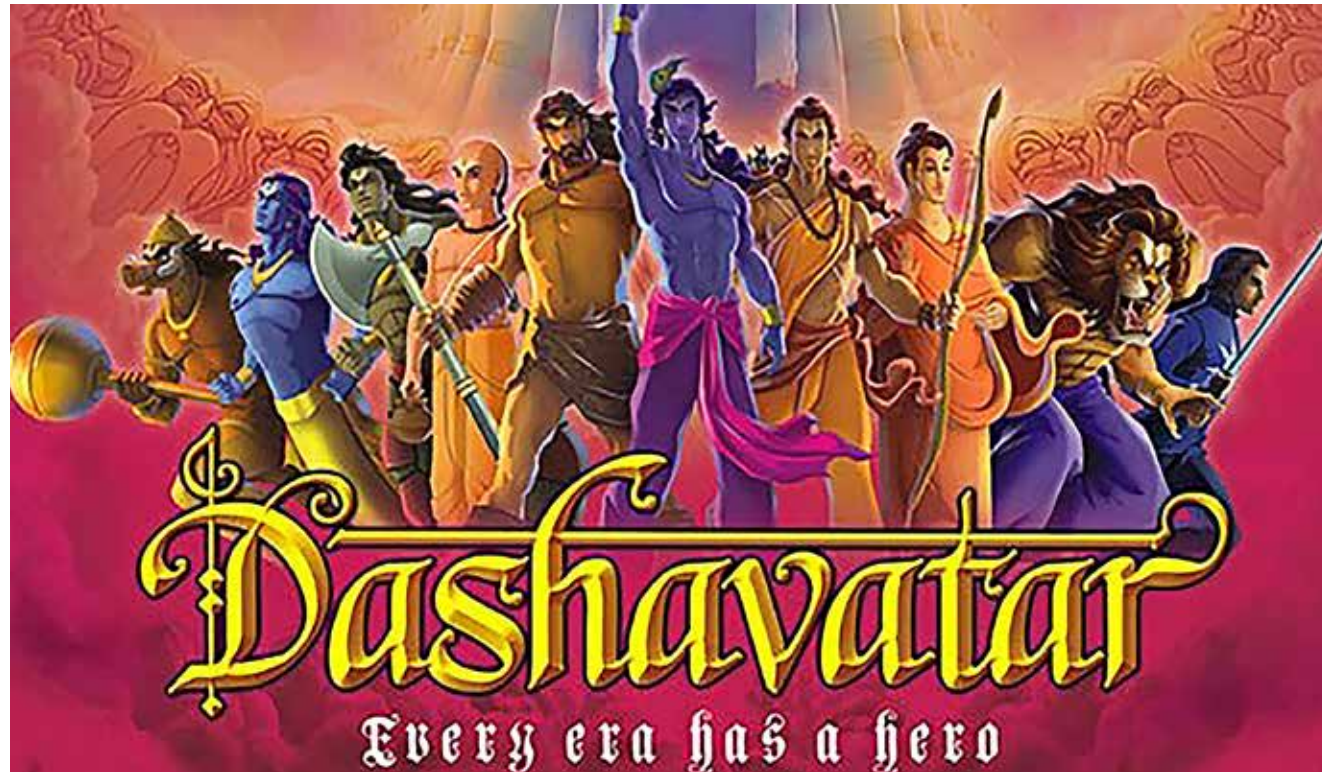
high-quality productions for all animation lovers in 2023.

The year will be marked by the production of new feature films and new series, such as POKOU: Queen and Princess, Little Pokou Season 4, and King Keita Season 3, to name a few.

In terms of events, the studio will organize from May 5 to 7, 2023, the

6th edition of the Abidjan Animation Film Festival (AAFF).

NEW TECHNOLOGY HELPS INDIAN ANIMATION INDUSTRY TAKE OFF



BY: SAM NGAI

The world animation industry has changed in recent decades, and Indian animation is no exception. On the one hand, technological advancement has pushed the industry to advance and upgrade in the area of technology and user access. On the other hand, the rise of OTT streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, etc., has provided consumers with access to a wide range of animation content. As their horizons are broadened, their consumer demand grew. With both technology and market growth, the Indian animation and VFX industry is estimated to be worth around INR 83

billion (approximately US\$1 billion) in 2021 and is expected to reach INR 180 billion (approximately US\$2.2 billion) by 2024.

Today, movie fans are looking for a high-quality visual experience - top-notch visual effects and realistic animation. The animation industry is poised to witness exponential growth with the help of technologies such as metaverse that are being formed with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR). Indian animators and production companies are exploring different possibilities for creating virtual environments to simulate real life.

Virtual reality technology will help the animation industry leap forward. Producers in the Indian animation

industry have begun to rely on modern VR tools to replace skill-intensive and time-consuming work.

With the advent of advanced VR tools, animators can now outfit characters and create keyframes in 3D. In addition, they can easily combine 360-degree video with animation data and achieve more by recording audio directly on the platform. While improving productivity, VR creates a better platform for animators to collaborate. It speeds up the entire production process, and producers can effortlessly connect frames of animation.

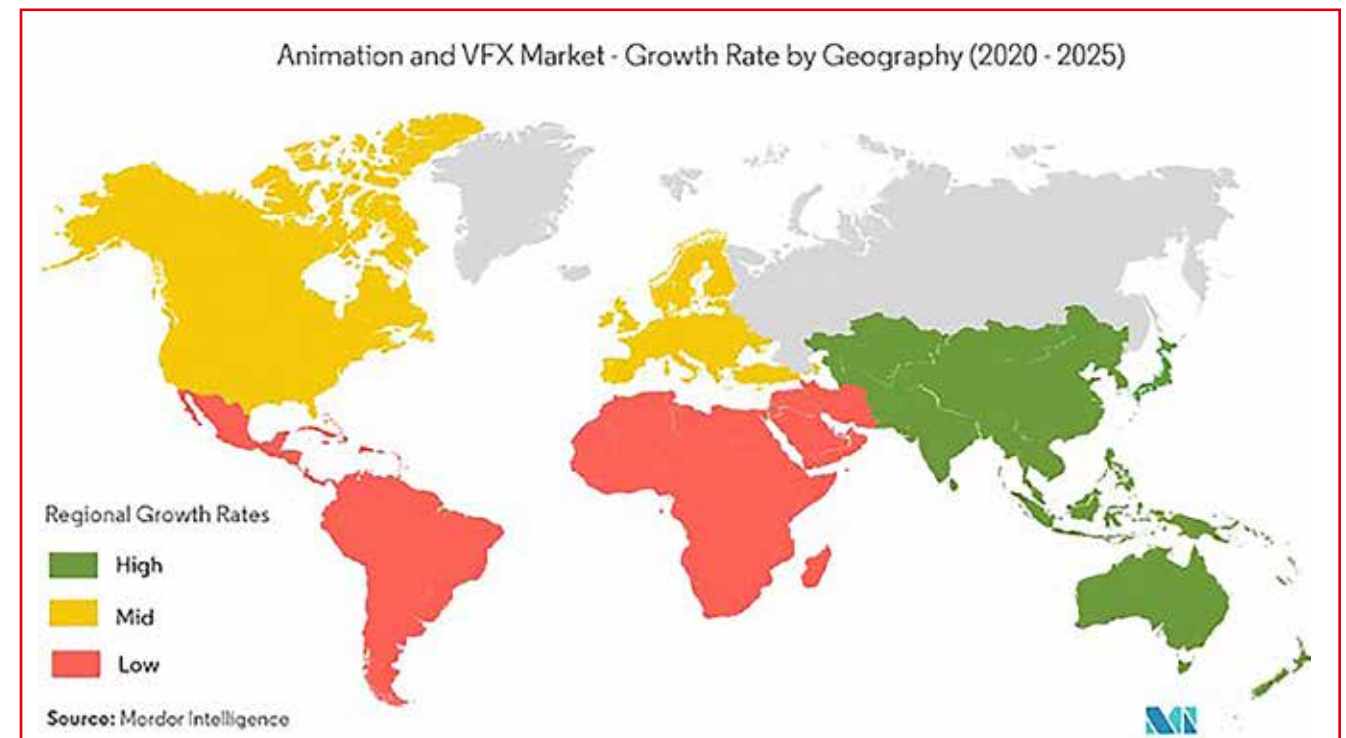
The combination of 2D, 3D, and VR will take media productions to a whole new level. At the same time, the audience's participation in the work will also be enhanced.

The Indian animation industry will see more and more opportunities from AI, VR, and the film industry. At the same time, marketing and advertising related to the animation industry will also expand in the future to reach more consumers.

India has a large labor force, as well as low production costs, and a large English-speaking population. More notably, the country has a large number of talented software engineers

and artistic talents. These will be India's strengths when it comes to developing internationalized creative industries. In recent years, the Indian animation industry has embarked on several international collaborations, and it is no surprise that it has become a dark horse.

In the post-pandemic era, technology will further fuel the development and breakthrough of the animation industry, and India will be one of the business entities to watch out for in this trend.



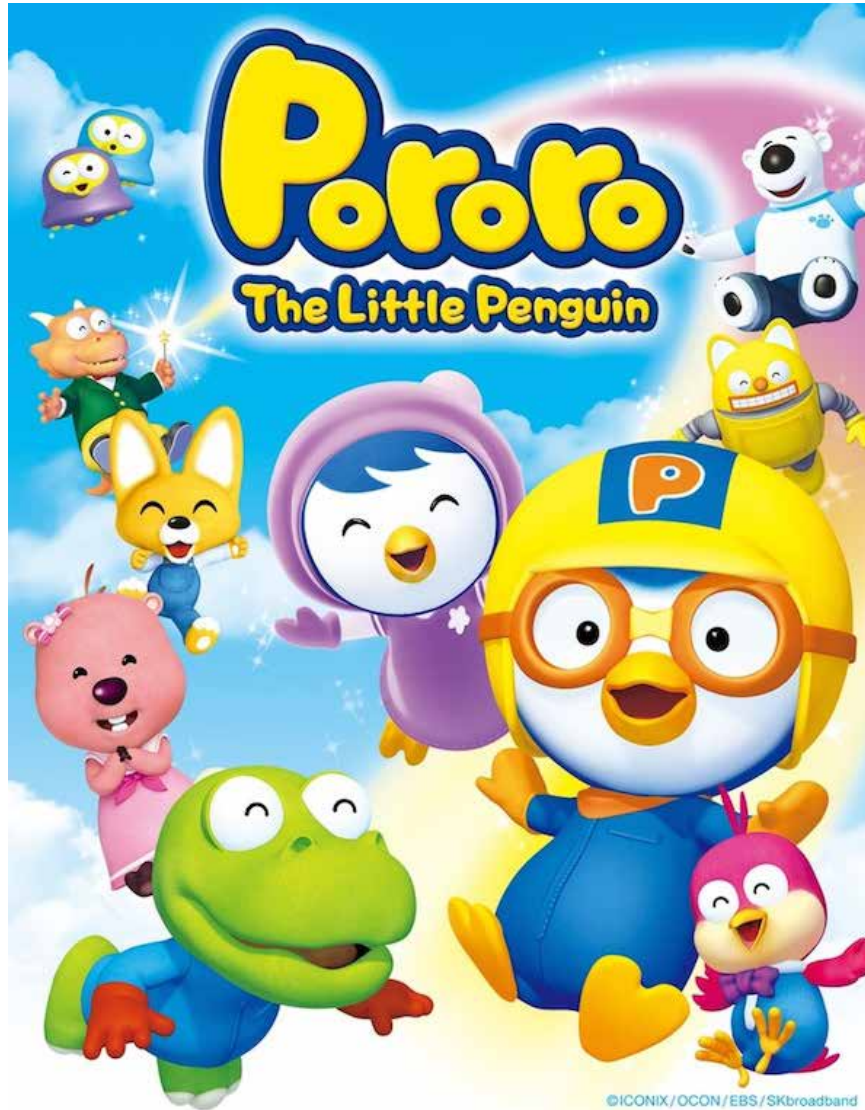
WEBTOONS A NEW DIRECTION FOR SOUTH KOREA'S CULTURE EXPORT

BY: CATINA YIU

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when hearing "South Korea"? It is not surprising to hear that a group of admiring enthusiasts say pop culture, cuisine, or fashion when answering this question. In the past three decades, the rise of the Korean wave (Hallyu) is being attributed to the success of K-drama and K-pop, as they bring a significant cultural impact and reshape world culture. Who can deny those romance plots and fascinating stage performances once you have seen them? I believe K-pop fans feel the same about it.

Successful cultural exports have undoubtedly boosted South Korea's international standing significantly. The popular boy band BTS and the 2019 Oscar-winning film Parasite are prime examples of how the country has demonstrated its big soft power to the world - through effective entertainment business management and more diverse creative output. However, the booming South Korean entertainment industry is not only limited to music and movies. The recent rise in popularity of K-webtoons is also likely to be the next industry to stand out on the international stage.

In Retrospect: Introduction to the South Korean animation industry
Hong Gil-dong (1967) was the first domestic color TV animation in South Korea, which was a great success at that time. In the 1980s, the animation industry developed rapidly with the support of the government of South Korea. In the late 1990s, the country's animation industry reached its peak with the explosion of local productions and international collaborations. In 1998, the animation *Pororo the Little*



Penguin became a major example of South Korean animation going global because of its interesting storyline and cute characters, and is still popular among children now. In the new century, South Korean animation companies are actively looking for business opportunities to develop online animation and seek to

develop the commercial value of anime characters with distribution companies, such as launching co-branded merchandise.

Currently, South Korean animation accounts for more than 30% of the global animation market and ranks third after Japan and the United States

in terms of production value. There are now more than 500 animation studios in South Korea, which produce hundreds of animated movies and videos every year.

K-webtoons Craze

In recent years, K-webtoons (a combination of Web and Cartoon concepts, usually read on computers and smartphones) have become a craze in South Korea. In 2022, Webtoons are rapidly sweeping the country, with half (50.3%) of the population aged 15-49 having seen Webtoons within seven days, according to the 2022 Webtoon Trends Report released by Open Survey in July 2022.

Webtoon sprouted in South Korea in 2003, and in 2012, K-webtoon platforms began to promote a pay-to-read mechanism, establishing a unique business model and strengthening the foundation for the development of the industry. In 2014, K-webtoons began to be exported overseas, and by 2018, some world-class IPs had been produced.

Several factors drive the development of Webtoons

The K-webtoon industry in South Korea enjoys several development advantages. First, South Korean animation has accumulated "production-based" experience over the past decades, and the industry has matured in terms of training for animation artists and the mechanism of animation production and distribution.

Secondly, K-webtoons companies have a broad vision. Naver, Kakao, and other companies actively cooperate with artists from different regions and introduce their works to the platform to explore super IPs, to create a global comic ecosystem. As a result, comic artists from all over the world can freely express their creativity on the South Korean webtoon platform and reach out to readers quickly and effectively.

In addition, the South Korean government's supporting policy has further promoted the development of related cultural industries. The Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), established in 2001, has contributed to the development of South

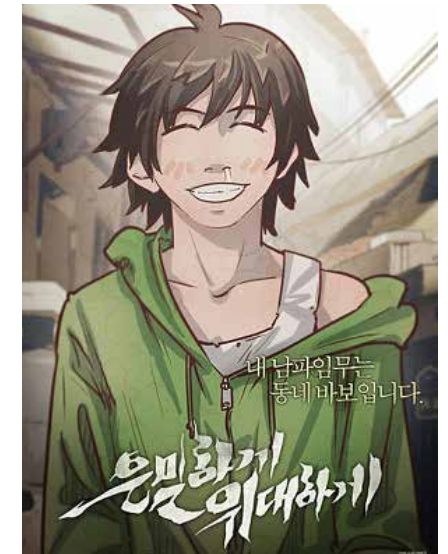
Korea's content industry. The Seoul International Cartoon & Animation Festival (SICAF), organized by KOCCA, has further promoted South Korean animation and the agency also provided subsidies to rescue companies that were struggling to start up their businesses.

To continue to expand the growth of the industry and create more business opportunities, KOCCA introduced the concept of "One source multi-use (OSMU)". This is a win-win market-oriented strategy that aims to transform a creative theme as a "resource" into multiple content products, such as movies, TV series, games, and merchandise.

A common OSMU nowadays is the adaptation of webcomics into movies and TV dramas. The movies *Along with the Gods* (2017, 2018), *Secretly, Greatly* (2013), and the TV drama *Misaeng* (2014) have proven the viability of the OSMU business model with their success in terms of box office and word-of-mouth. The cooperation between animation companies and circulation enterprises mentioned previously also proves the development potential of OSMU. In the context of the booming market, KakaoPage, one

of the professional webtoon platforms, plans to adapt 65 cartoon comics into TV series between 2021 and 2023.

After nearly 20 years of deployment, South Korea's webtoons have finally yielded a fruitful harvest in recent years. From movies to comics, South Korea's prominence in the cultural industry is worthy of reference for industry insiders and policymakers in other countries.



MY SUPERHERO... GREEK ANIMATION!

**SOURCE: ARISTARCHOS
PAPADANIEL**

25 Greek animated short films have been funded by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports under the Special Program of Support for the Film Community (Animation). The program was initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to support different cinema branches (Short Films, Documentaries, Animation). The Greek Film Centre implemented this specific action of support, producing and promoting Greek animated films most of which already are traveling and being honored internationally.

The following short films have already made a promising start: I Lost The Way by Panagiotis Rappas produced by Panagiotis Kyriakoulakos (ASIFA Hellas "Stratos Stasinou" Honorable Mention), Mine created and produced by Daphne Xourafi, Ideal Other by Dimitris Patrikios produced by View Studio, The Knight's Hart by Paraskevi Markatou produced by Sierra Recording and The Incredible Mrs. Lien Mourlen by Eleni Xoupa produced by 3 Dimension.

ECHO by Sergio Kotsovoulos is an animated co-production of Greece, Iran and Canada by Funny Tales Studio, Please Insert Coin and Mystic House. It participated in 47 festivals internationally, having received 11 awards and 6 more nominations.

Canary created and produced by Chrysoula Korovesi and Marios Gampierakis won first award in the Greek Competition Section of Animasyros International Animation Festival and Travel Bugs by Fokion Xenos produced by Neda Film won a

special mention, as it had two years ago too, whereas in Animasyros Agora Pitching Sessions got close to get a pass to Annecy Festival du Monde MIFA pitches.

In Animasyros 2022, the short films In Between by Effie Pappa produced by Marni Films and Pink Mountain by Thomas Künstler produced by StudioBauhaus had their festival premiere, as was also the case for the short animated documentary Hellenic Places: Hermoupolis by

Charalampos Margaritis a year before. Hellenic Places is an Animasyros Platforma-Urban Culture Productions that now expands into an animated documentaries series co-produced by Cosmote TV. The episodes will explore in an animated storytelling way the history of Hydra, Messolonghi, Naoussa, Kasos, Psarra and Cyprus.

The Little Triangle Fish vs. the Great Shark by Christos Leivaditis and Aikaterini Papageorgiou is produced by White Fox SA, the company that co-produced along with Cosmote TV and Anama Ltd. the unique 3D animation feature film KARAGHOZIS The Movie by Akis Karas, Christos Leivaditis and Aikaterini Papageorgiou, which premiered in December 2022 in Greek cinemas.

During December 2022, Cat Postale by Zacharias Mavroeidis, produced by Microlake Productions and Wild At



Heart, had also its festival premiere in Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People (Children's Jury Over 13 Years Old: Best Animated Short Film Award).

The Song Of The Fates by Aristarchos Papadaniél, who also sings the lyrics set to music by composer Dimitris Maramis, is scheduled to begin its animation festival tour during 2023, following the festival premiere of another Syllipsis production, the live-action feature poetic documentary MAUTHAUSEN, where Aristarchos has the honor to perform the masterpiece cantata Mauthausen by world-renowned Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis (Z, Zorba) and theatrical playwright and concentration camp survivor, Iakovos Kambanellis (Stella).

My Superhero Husband by Alexandra Tagali and Mikaela K. Deligianni, was firstly pitched as an animated anthology in Cartoon Springboard. After its selection as a short film in the Special Program of Support for the Film Community (Animation) by the Greek Film Centre, the project was pitched in BAF - Balkan Animation Forum at Thessaloniki Animation Festival (TAF), where it received the 3rd Award and a place in the heart of Dimitris Savvaidis and Glen Beaudin, the producers who suggested to contribute to the implementation of an animated TV series production. My Superhero Husband as an animated

series was officially selected for the Annecy MIFA Pitches 2022, where it received the 1st Award Disney+ For A New Series! After this special achievement -the first ever for a Greek production in Annecy- the project was an official selection in Cartoon Forum 2022, where it scored among the six best pitches of European co-productions.

This year also, in Annecy Perspectives Short Films in Competition, The Blind Writer created and produced by the Paris-based, Greek animation director and University teacher Georges Sifianos was officially selected.

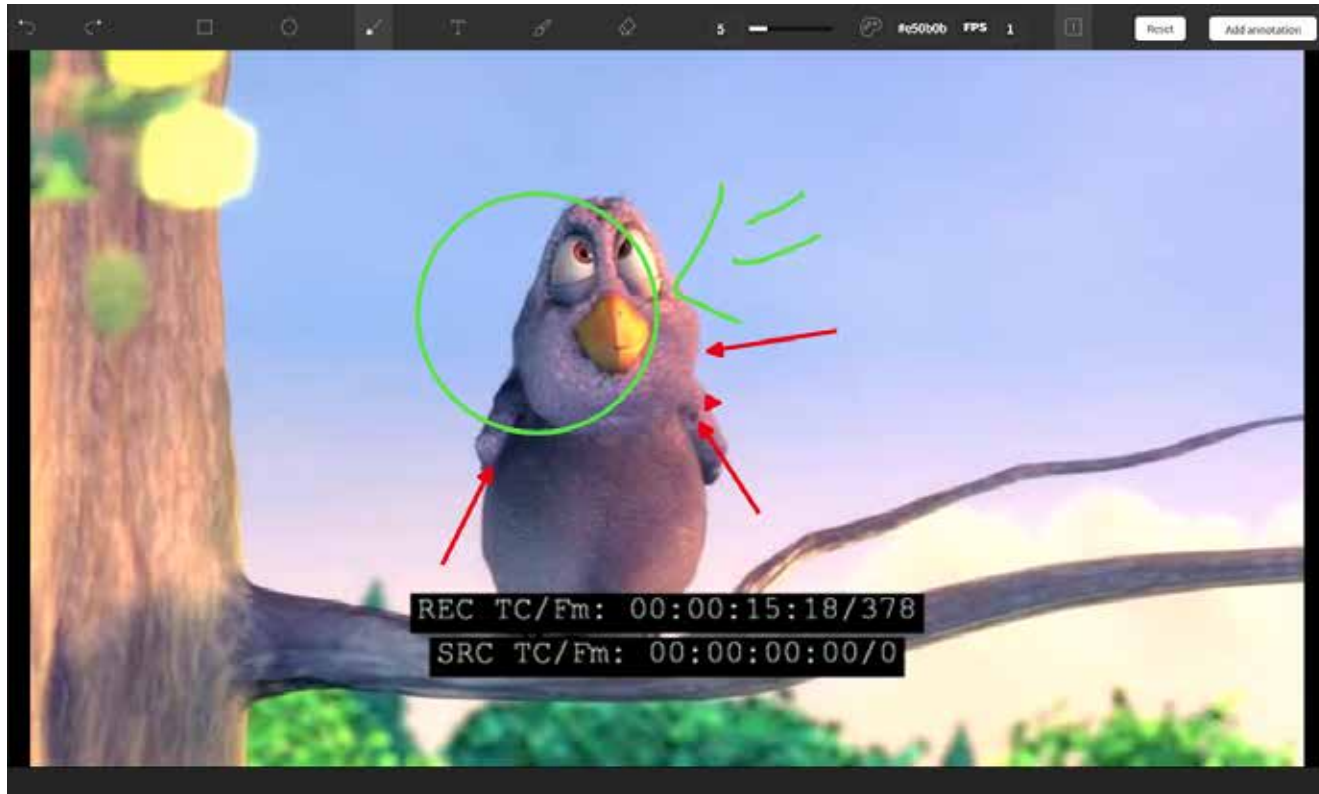
ASIFA Hellas, the Greek National Animation Association, participated for the sixth consecutive time with the Greek national delegation in the Annecy International Animation Film



Festival MIFA 2022 in a pavillion. The mission was made possible with the kind support of the National Centre for Audiovisual Media and Communication (EKOME), the Greek Film Centre and Enterprise Greece.

Just before the end of 2022, the president of Animasyros and ASIFA Hellas, Vassilis C. Karamitsanis, was elected president of the International Center of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ), the most important global organization for children's and youth cinema that was established decades ago by UNESCO.

And the amazing adventures of My Superhero... Greek Animation continue! Stay tuned!



C2MONSTER THE PROMISING MANAGEMENT SOLUTION PROVIDER

SOURCE: JIN-SUNG CHOI

Founded in 2003, C2Monster is a tech company based in South Korea specializing in video content production-related technologies and has been involved in distributing software and applications within the industry. We provide an integrated pipeline management solution – “WORMHOLE” and a digital asset management solution – “BLACKHOLE”.

For the last 10 years, C2Monster Co., Ltd. has been providing an efficient production integration environment

to domestic and foreign content producers intending to contribute to securing their global competitiveness through the development of production process management solutions, the Digital assets management solution, and related technologies for remote/collaboration in the digital content production.

With a deep understanding of difficulties and issues as well as an awareness of the lack of features in existing collaboration tools, we came out with our first beta version of “WORMHOLE” in 2019 – our video content creator collaboration tool. With our successful launch of its commercial service in 2021, we continue to expand

our services in the North-East Asian market preceding China as well as other parts of Asia in 2022.

WORMHOLE (production pipeline management solution) was developed by experts in the industry after analyzing feedback from users who have been afflicted by other applications. It targeted the Asia market starting from South Korea, but its characteristics of flexibility and customization give it the ability to cover many other markets in the meantime.

WORMHOLE is an integrated process management tool for systematic and



C2Monster's Advantages and Features:

- 1) Value creation through implementing a platform with patented ICT core technology such as pipeline process management, VR content authoring, and digital data real-time matching for a digital media production management system.
- 2) Build and develop customized AI, a consolidated production platform for integrating pre-production, main production, and post-production process
- 3) Generate growth and product value through creative human resources

project production. Efficient remote/collaborative production management can be approached by applying WORMHOLE. Production schedules, budget/execution analytics per project, and risk management through forecasting can be performed by it.

WORMHOLE can help to save production time and cost with the features below:

- Project budget plan
- Calculation of input personnel
- Actual workforce checking
- Settlement analytics support

Another great attention-worthy thing about the tool is that C2Monster has actively kept updating WORMHOLE based on clients' feedback throughout the two years of beta testing. The following unique features are not available in any other applications but ours:

- Statistics for production budget and schedule for risk management of business administrations
- DAM (Digital Asset Management) solution for efficient management of existing assets
- AI-produced forecasts of timeline and required budget upon the delay in

specific tasks & optimal re-schedule proposal

It's been our great honor to see the increased market share and adoption ratio in the domestic market of WORMHOLE for the last 3 years. Also, it has obtained positive feedback from studios in China and Asia with whom we have provided our beta. WORMHOLE has also attracted many studios in other regions, and we have



received inquiries about the interest in adopting the application from studios in North America.

BLACKHOLE

BLACKHOLE, also developed by C2Monster, is a digital assets management solution tool. It is deployed on your internet as a server and can support developing and recycling assets to classify and manage them efficiently.

What Does BLACKHOLE Have:

- 1) Item viewer: various items can be viewed as an image grid
- 2) Integrated search tool: a wide range of search functions are offered
- 3) Administrator settings: You can manage users, permissions, upload history, categories, and tags
 - User and authority management
 - Adding, editing, and deleting categories for item management
- 5) Dedicated uploader: can generate previews in formats including video, image, PDF, TXT, PPT, etc

As great tools that can connect production companies, WORMHOLE and BLACKHOLE ensure that different parties can communicate and collaborate efficiently in the production process.

Contact:

Website: www.c2monster.com
Email: ceo@c2monster.com

DEEDEE ANIMATION STUDIO KEEP ON GOING AND WE WILL REACH OUR GOAL

SOURCE: DEEDEE ANIMATION STUDIO

DeeDee Animation Studio was founded in 2017 by Dang Hai Quang and Le Quynh Nhu, the couple who quit their jobs to pursue a childhood dream, without any experience or knowledge of art. They brought in Doan Anh Kiet, as their first animator, and later on in 2018, Ha Huy Hoang as their art director.

In Vietnam, most people still have misconceptions and prejudice about art in general, let alone animation. In that situation, putting effort into building this studio was a huge gamble for us. In fact, our parents didn't approve of our choice from their hearts. But we kept going.

We had and still have one single philosophy for what we do, which also inspired the name of the studio: *Đi Đi S Đến* (Keep on going and we'll reach our goal). Our energy comes from the burning passion for the medium and an unshakable belief that it has the power to tell inspiring stories and move people just as much, if not more than even live-action films.

We started out with 6 people in a small office, trying to push the envelope of our craft, trying to absorb as much as we could from all the world's animation, films and series that we love both as children and now as adults. Most of us didn't experience any artistic education, save for Hoang, who only recently came home after years of studying animation in the U.S.

We struggled every day to figure out



our pipelines, teach each other, and build the studio that all of us would like to work in. 5 years later, we now have roughly 60 people with 2 offices in 2 biggest cities in Vietnam, a body of work that rivals any competition in the Southeast Asia region both in numbers and level of standard, and high-profile international clients.

We have been involved and credited in a wide range of different types of projects: from TV commercials and series to short films, from original content to collaborations with international partners, with clients from the U.S. (6 Point Harness, Duncan Studio), Ireland (JAM Media),



Ha Huy Hoang "Splendid River" is a Vietnamese artist born and raised in Hanoi. His artistic skills include hand-drawn animation, character design, storyboarding, art direction, illustration, and comic books. His works are heavily inspired by American and European cartoons, but he's able to adapt to any drawing style.

He has a BFA in traditional animation from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco, and has experience working for several American clients. He is the Co-Founder, Art Director and Animation Supervisor at DeeDee Animation Studio.

Thailand (M2 Animation, and even Japan (Shin-Ei Doga). We're still craving more.

Reaching international standards and getting more partners is not the only thing DeeDee Animation Studio is putting efforts into. One of the "beasts" that we still have yet to conquer is producing our own series or feature film and getting it distributed globally.

For the last 5 years, we've been in active development of 4 different animated series of various genres. One of them is "Broken Being". It is a large-scale project that comes with its own world-building, meant to be a sci-fi anthology made up of short independent stories of different styles, inspired by the cyberpunk genre but with a Vietnamese twist. A prequel of sorts was produced for the project and packaged as a stand-alone short film and has been received well by way of several international awards, and a Vietnamese award too.

We've also been exploring the "prime time sit-com" style animated series in "The Naught-Nice Business" and "The Hero", both of which have debuted on YouTube and received praises from a wide range of audiences.

Meanwhile, a preschool project is in its early development stage and will be introduced to international potential partners soon.

The animation industry in Vietnam has seen tremendous growth in the last 10 years or so from the private sector. Several independent studios across the country have been popping up and producing quality works that have become widely popular.

Each of them has its own agenda and plan for the future of Vietnamese

animation. DeeDee Animation can be proud to say Dee Dee is one of the companies that is doing better than most, but we still have a long way to go to fulfil our dreams.

In the coming years, all of us would have to work even harder to put our own name onto the map of the animation industry, right alongside the very big names that made our childhood magical all those years ago.



SICHUAN CACA THEME PARK

CHINA'S FIRST CREATIVE METAVERSE TOURISM PROJECT



BY: CLOUDY PAN

Leshan CACA Cartoon Kingdom is located in the central area of Xinqu, Jinyan County, Leshan City, Sichuan Province, China. It is within an hour's drive from the world heritage site Mount Emei, Leshan Giant Buddha, and Chengdu Tianfu New Area.

In order to better align with the future development path of the city and meet the aspirations and pursuit of a better life, Guangzhou Mancity Cultural Tourism Science and Technology Development Co., Ltd. has creatively developed the unique CACA Planet IP series based on the popular concept of the metaverse. Taking local cultural stories as the main theme, this project combines animation, technology, and cultural tourism, and introduces the innovative SATO model. This model

revolves around the city's cultural IP story (Story), integrates original animation (Animation) and digital technology (Technology), and applies a multidimensional operational model (Operation). Through these efforts, Leshan CACA Cartoon Kingdom has become the first metaverse creative city in China.

The project is based on the rich historical and cultural heritage of Leshan. By exploring and extracting its abundant humanistic landscapes and tourist resources, combined with cutting-edge digital technology, we are planning to construct eight experiential venues. These venues will include an anime-themed hotel, famous intangible cultural heritage restaurants, leisure shopping, scientific research and study, cultural performances, and more. The project targets families and young people, and has specially developed immersive night tour projects and products to provide an exciting and

enriching experience. With its unique open layout, themed blocks, and one venue one story experience, the project fills the gap in the tourism market in Leshan. Once completed, it will become a benchmark project in Leshan and surrounding cities, creating a micro-vacation destination and a new landmark for urban tourism in the southern part of Sichuan province. The first phase of the project, currently under construction, includes five major experiential projects: Interstellar Adventure, Dinosaur Tribe, The town of demons, Dream of Returning to Shu, and Shu Xian Love.

1. Interstellar Adventure: Immersive flying interactive device, 3D stereoscopic movie presentation, the combination of real scenes and special effects creates an infinite space, an original story of the CACA planet, exploring extraterrestrial civilizations through interstellar exploration, challenging the limits of



physical sensation, allowing visitors to experience the fantastic feast of alien worlds.

2. Dinosaur Tribe: Immersive Dynamic Dome Theater, featuring cutting-edge immersive 3D high-definition imaging technology, visually stunning and realistic natural environment simulations, thrilling storytelling, allowing visitors to feel as if they have traveled back to the Cretaceous period, personally experiencing an ancient adventure and indulging in breathtaking visual spectacles.

3. The town of demons: River-style Dark Ride. The water-powered riverboat takes you on a thrilling journey through a multimedia experience that seamlessly blends with the real environment, creating a visually stunning spectacle. Immerse yourself in the cultural thematic scenes of Leshan, where the atmosphere of film and television comes to life. Explore the rich cultural landscapes of Leshan as you witness a battle between justice and evil, and become a part of a story that changes history.

4. Dreaming Back to the Land of Shu:

Experience a multi-dimensional performance in a night-time themed entertainment scene, where you can fully immerse yourself in the role-playing experience. Each building tells a unique story, offering a delightful and intriguing adventure. Through a time-traveling ritual, you will indulge in a mesmerizing dream, filled with enchanting experiences. As a visitor, you can participate in

role-playing activities, explore the Tang and Song dynasties' prosperous streets, interact with others, and enjoy performances on stage, AR showcases in the towers, and multidimensional light and shadow performances. Immerse yourself in the picturesque wonderland of the Land of Shu.

5. Shu Xian's Enchanting Tales: This immersive experience showcases the unique cultural heritage of Shu, combining cutting-edge digital technology to present the ancient marine world, the miraculous evolution of life, and the stunning salt snow world. It creates a fantastical world of Shu embroidery, where visitors can witness the local cultural traditions in three-dimensional depth without the need for special glasses. Step into a journey through time and space, and explore the mysterious universe of Shu's boundless realm.

Guangzhou Mancity Cultural Tourism Technology Development Co., Ltd.'s original CACA Planet IP series breaks cognitive limits, explores love and life, amplifies the sky of the soul, and make happiness more wonderful.





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DREAMERS STUDIO 友梦影业



DREAMERS STUDIO LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE FUTURE ANIMATED FILM MARKET

SOURCE: DREAMERS STUDIO

In 2019, *Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child* (2019) ("Nezha") brought a major earthquake to the Chinese film market, with a box office of more than 5 billion RMB, placing it in third place on China's box office leaderboard. These are heights previously unimaginable and unforeseen, and acts as an excellent market signal for Dreamers Studio, which has a strong focus on animated film production.

Witnessing the Renaissance of Chinese Animation Films

If we examine the development of Canvassing the development of

China's animated film market (for now, let us exclude "ancient folklore" such as *The Monkey King: Uproar in Heaven* (1961)), we can see that there are two works that have divided the development of China's animated film market into three phases: the chaotic period before *Monkey King: Hero is Back* (2015) ("Hero is Back"), the blossoming of the film industry after *Hero is Back* and before *Nezha*, and the unknown yet promising post-*Nezha* era. Before *Hero is Back* in 2015, Chinese animated films were still synonymous with "low-grade", and the only Chinese animated film project that grossed more than 100 million RMB was *One Hundred Thousand Bad Jokes* (2014), an animated film targeting youths that

grossed 119 million RMB at the box office. If someone approached you to invest in a youth-oriented animation film at this time, you will definitely think that they are crazy. The founder of Dreamers Studio, Justin Jiang, is precisely this crazy person, who was the pioneer and the producer behind *Hero is Back*. The grim financial situation and the more desolate market situation meant *Hero is Back* was nearly shut down. But with the support and love of the post-production team, the movie was finished the changed the future of China's animation industry. This was the origin story of Justin Jiang "realizing dreams with friends", which became the studio's motto, later becoming the name "Dreamers Studio".

High quality Dreamers Studio projects for the post-Nezha era

Dreamers Studio currently has four key projects planned for release between 2023 and 2025, including the sci-fi film *Heart of Steel*, the modern urban film *Planet Cat*, the mythological film *The Classic of Mountains and Seas: Monster Trainer*, and the Chinese folklore fantasy film *Ya Shan*. Exploring the infinite possibilities of themes is the unique creative logic of Dreamers Studio. Chinese animation films do not necessarily have to dwell on traditional myths; more diverse theme directions and open creative spaces do not only broaden the Chinese animation film market, but also attracts more quality creators to join in on the artistic process.

After the difficult experience of creating *Hero is Back*, Justin Jiang firmly believes that Chinese animated films need to embark on a better-designed, more complete path of industrialization, developing a mature production process along the way. To this end, Dreamers Studio has been working on the integration of the script team, production team and marketing team in the past two years. An excellent script is just the first step in the development

of a project. Without a qualified script, one would not blindly enter the mid-production stage, which is a standard upheld by Dreamers for animation and film production. A powerful creative directorial team forms the core of any project, determining the aesthetic and storytelling standard of the project, ultimately the artistic heights that the film is able to reach. The production team must optimize production resources to provide the directorial team with a stellar environment for creation. Co-ordination of all aspects of the production process is the key to realizing an industrialized process, and acts as a guarantee for the birth of high-quality projects.

From *Hero is Back* in 2015 to *Nezha* in 2019 to *New Gods: Nezha Reborn* in 2021, although there have been a number of breakout hits with new styles and stories, compared to the annual box office share of animated films in the US market of nearly 20%, there is still room for China's animated film market to improve on both quantity and quality of production. The steady output of billion-dollar masterpieces annually will truly mark the beginning of the maturation of China's animated film industry.



The People

Dreamers Studio is formed by industry veterans who have been around since the beginning of the Chinese CG animation industry. As a people's company, we value the relationship with people working with us. Animation directors, artists, story writers, channels distributors or financiers are our friends. The Chinese name for Dreamers Studio is "朋友的梦想-友梦 Friends' Dreams", and we hope to make their dreams become a reality, to make beautiful animation together.



DREAMERS STUDIO
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
JUSTIN JIANG

- Producer of the animated film "Monkey King: Hero is Back" and Executive Producer of the animated film "The Wind Guardian".
- Justin is a senior animation industry veteran, co-founded Gaolu Animation Distribution Company in 2005, founded Xingle Film in 2010. Justin had produced and distributed more than 30 animated films during his career, and founded Dreamers Studio in 2016.



DREAMERS STUDIO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
YANG DAN

- Producer of the animated film "Monkey King: Hero is Back" and Executive Producer of the animated film "The Wind Guardian".
- Since 1998, he has been the director and producer for CCTV. From 2009, he has provided media promotion services to major Hollywood producers in the Chinese market. Films he has helped to promote include "Avatar, Kung Fu Panda 2" and "Transformers 3". Dozens of Hollywood films, such as "Ice Age 4, Smurfs 1-2, Pirates of the Caribbean".
- Co-founder of the Beijing Weying Shidai Technology Co., Ltd in 2014.



DREAMERS STUDIO
PRESIDENT FOR GLOBAL OPERATION
RAYMOND D. NEOH

- Founder of CG Global Entertainment Limited
- In 2000, Mr. Neoh successfully established Global Digital Corporation and Institute of Digital Media Technology (IDMT, the "Whampoa Military Academy" animation training) with his brother Anthony F. Neoh. Through years of operation in the digital media industry, he has accumulated tremendous human, technical and market resources. Mr. Neoh is also the founder of GDC Technology, Ltd., one of the largest digital cinema equipment manufacturer in the world.

Complete animation IP incubation, production, post-production and distribution chain

IP ACQUISITION

- Professional content planning, to create an all ages family Edutainment brand
- Create an animation director studio platform
- International IP co-production
- Media content development

PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

- Experience in animation production pipeline
- Production cost control and management
- Technical R&D support



COMPLETE DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

- 9 years of experience in the distribution of animated films, China's largest professional animated film distributor, cover all theaters chains
- Cover all media distribution channel (internet streaming, TV channels, knowledge payment, book publishing)
- Full services marketing planning team, with mature business and media channels

FULL IP VALUE-CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

- Toy and other peripheral product development and licensing
- Theme performances, theme exhibitions, theme park cooperation
- Game, AR, VR interactive experience development

THE LAST RHINO STANDING

GIGGLE GARAGE TRIBUTE TO IMAN

SOURCE: GIGGLE GARAGE

These rhinos are the smallest of the living rhinoceros and the only Asian rhino with two horns. They are covered with long hairs and more closely related to the extinct woolly rhinos than any of the other rhino species alive today.

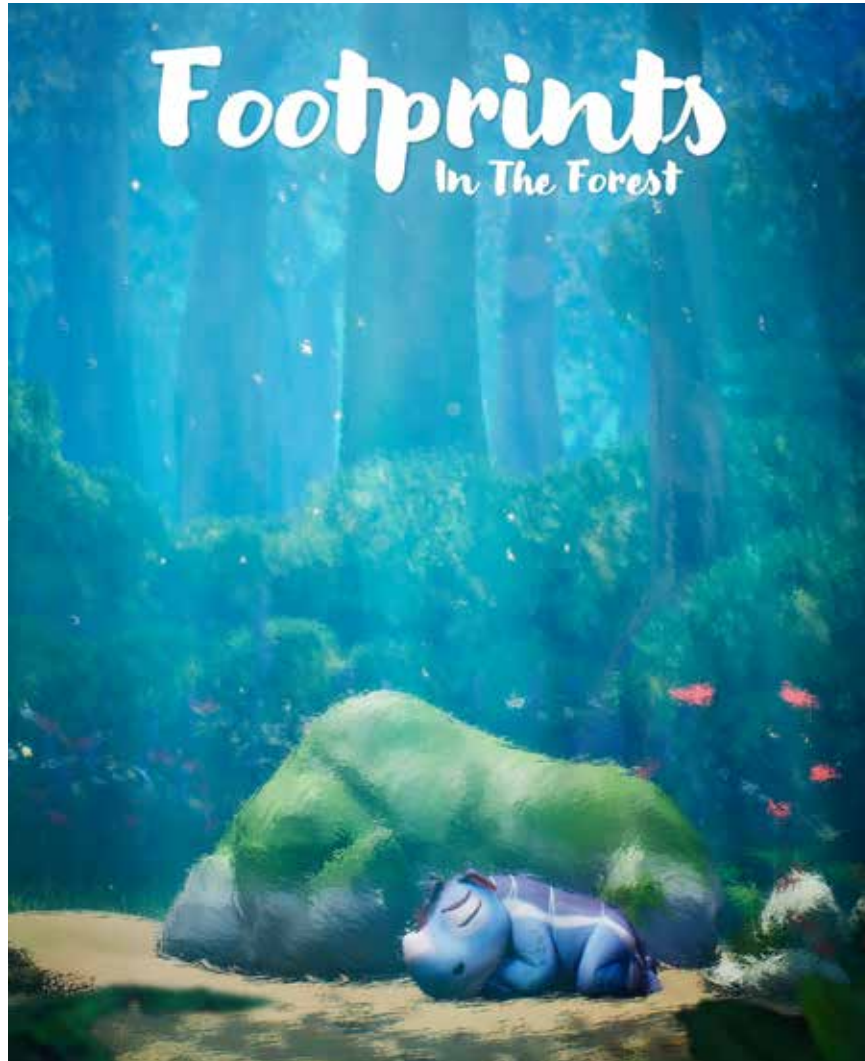
Iman, Malaysia's last rhino, died on November 23rd, 2019, after a long battle with uterine tumors. Her death meant the species is now fully extinct in Malaysia after being declared extinct in the wild in 2015.

"Iman was given the very best care and attention since her capture in March 2014 right up to the moment she passed. No one could have done more," said Christine Liew, the Sabah State's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment then.

Iman was believed to be 25 years old when she died. She was named after a river near where she was discovered and captured in Sabah's Danum Valley for a captive-breeding program. Iman also means Faith in Malay language.

Footprints In The Forest

Set in the breath-taking terrain of the Borneo rainforest, 'Footprints In The Forest' follows the journey of a rare young Sumatran rhino named Iman as she embarks on a daring journey through the intimidating jungle after the harrowing loss of her mother to the poachers. Finding herself all alone in the vast hostile rainforest teeming with natural enemies (and the occasional ally), Iman must bravely fend for herself in search for a new life and a new place to call home. Faced with obstacles and adversities at every turn, she must fight for her survival driven by the memory of her doting mother and the



unwavering will to live.

The film is inspired by Iman, the last Sumatran rhino in Malaysia and her death officially elevated the status of this endangered species to extinction. It was a bleak moment for many because as a nation, we failed to protect the vulnerable. Born and raised in Borneo where Sumatran rhinos used to roam free in the wild, it was devastating for Malaysians. We saw this coming and yet we failed to stop it.

Isn't there something more that we can do to prevent this?

Over the last 20 years, the number of Sumatran rhinos has dropped significantly, and we are only left with an estimated 30 percent of the population and the decimation is mostly due to poaching. Today, fewer than a hundred remain in the wild in Indonesia. As Claire Deaton has so succinctly stated, "When they are

all gone, when every life has been stolen, how will you remember them? Extinction is forever."

"It is my hope that this film is able to raise awareness of the dire situation we are facing right now, not only with Sumatran rhinos but with so many beautiful wildlife around the world that is at the brink of extinction" - Juhaidah Joemin, Director

The short film will be an homage to the last Sumatran rhino in Malaysia, and to all the remaining Sumatran Rhinos that are believed to be fewer than 80, including about 30 mature individuals (source: IUCN).

Footprints In The Forest: Creativity And Technology

In 2018, Giggle Garage had conducted its own research on the integration of game engine in its production pipeline. This started the use of UE for its original projects and this pipeline was further improved to handle long form tv series animation that traditionally was produced in a strict Maya pipeline. At the moment, Giggle Garage is producing the second season of its own co-produced tv series "Space Nova" in an integrated Unreal Engine pipeline. Footprints in The Forest is an 18-minute short film that was produced utilizing this integrated production pipeline. But it was not without some challenges. Real-time rendering solutions like Unreal Engine is originally designed for video games and often been oriented toward pure technicians and engineers, leaving graphic artists aside in the process.

The directors of the project, Juhaidah Joemin (pic) and Sandra Khoo wanted Footprints In The Forest to be a short with artistic look and feel, and highlighting the sad moment of death due to poaching as well as depicting a dense, untouched forest of Borneo in stylized look.

In order to achieve this, the team has to come up with a water painting effects for the background and keeping the characters animated in full CG look. Additionally, with Unreal Engine, the team was able to fully use the built-in tools: there are already vast sets of tools that can be utilized within UE itself

to come up with the final look of the show. This includes important tools such as the landscape, foliage, and automatic Level Of Detail (LOD) tools. The team hand painted the brush strokes in order to achieve the brush strokes, stylized effects for the environment. As for the leaves, they were populated with a lot of plane meshes and post processing. The thick jungle of Borneo was emulated in UE to create visuals of an untouched forest. Post processing was also used to achieve stylized look for the water streams and the waterfall.

The project was started in mid-2021, and despite of the limited resources and time, the directors Juhaidah Joemin and Sandra Khoo, successfully produced the short film and it is currently has been selected in multiple international film festivals and recently won the Gold Award (Malaysia) for DigiCon 24th, organized by Tokyo Broadcasting Systems, Japan. The two women directors managed to transport the audience through the deep jungles of Borneo, specifically around the Maliau Basin area, get to know the short life of Iman's mom and most importantly, root firmly for Iman in her quest by retracing the footprints of her mom to find her new world.

Producers And Storytellers: Impacting Real World Issues

We have an amazing planet with amazing creatures both large and small. However, many of the species on our planet are facing threats with thousands on the brink of disappearing forever and humans have accelerated this process – via uncontrolled clearing

and destructions of the animals habitats, hunting, poaching and climate change.

The Footprints in The Forest is just a short film, but the directors hope that it will have a lasting effect at raising awareness on one of the most beautiful, terrifying, cutest and fiercest, threatened and critically endangered animals on the planet; in this case, the Sumatran Rhino. The Sumatran Rhinos are classed as critically endangered species due to illegal wildlife trade, loss of habitats and lack of protections. Please talk to your local animal conservation groups to learn about specific actions you could do to help in protecting animals that are facing dangers and extinction. Or visit <https://www.savesumatranrhinos.org/> - an alliance organization where WWF, Global Wildlife Conservation, International Rhino Foundation, International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the National Geographic Society, have joined together with partners on-the-ground to launch a Sumatran Rhino Rescue effort.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR:

JUHAIDAH JOEMIN

As a child growing up in a small farming village in Borneo - Sabah, East Malaysia; Juhaidah Joemin had no idea that her fascination for storytelling and her peculiar imagination will pave her steps into the animation industry, a male-dominated field with known glass ceiling for women, particularly in South East Asia.



VINCENT YEUNG

THE AMBASSADOR OF VIRTUAL REALITY



BY: ANN LEE, TIMOTHY TAN

As a cutting-edge explorer in the field of virtual arts, Mr. Yeung is renowned for his innovative metaverse art forms and virtual artistry. His journey in digital arts creation has been filled with colorful surprises and challenges, from predicting the arrival of a virtual world over 20 years

ago, to developing new experiences with modern metaverse tech. He has continued to push the boundaries of digital media, continuously introducing breakthrough ideas for Hong Kong's creative media industry.

"The IT Master": Prophecies from Over 20 Years Ago

Vincent Yeung's work began to introduce forward-thinking ideas since over two decades years ago, when he

foresaw the arrival of the virtual world and wrote "The IT Master" (《IT腦夫子》), a richly illustrated book that combines comics and text to dream of a future world with endless virtual possibilities. The book, which he co-wrote as a virtual author, covers stories from an IT workplace, and predicts future technological developments, such as the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR). Vincent Yeung writes about new technologies

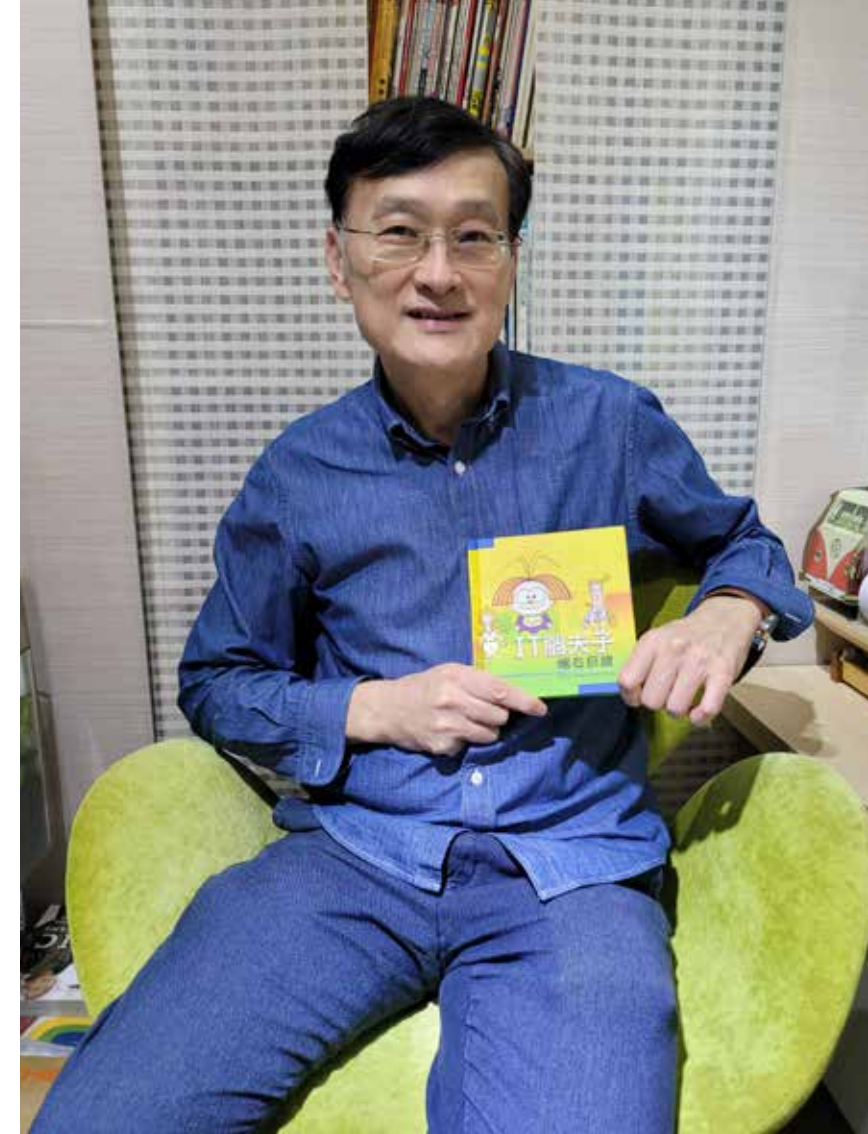
and creates entertaining, humorous stories, bringing the virtual world introduced in the book to life; for example, one of the chapters describes a man who is playing basketball, but eventually realizes that he is actually playing a virtual reality game.

Vincent Yeung has always believed that humans actually live in a virtual world. He mentioned that people usually think that they exist in a huge universe and that they are insignificant beings. However, his view was that the world we know may simply be our perception, just like the virtual world in a game. His prediction was considered unthinkable at the time, but in recent years, scientists such as Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk have made similar hypotheses, suggesting that we may be living in virtual worlds rather than a real universe. He looks forward to the virtual world of the future, predicting that may exist directly in the human brain; Elon Musk's Neuralink technology is already working towards this goal. He believes that in the future, humans come to find that they are creations of a higher civilization, and discussed the authenticity of virtual worlds and questioned how we can prove whether we are living in them.

The Rise of Digital Art: From Hyperrealism to the Metaverse

For many years, Vincent Yeung has been promoting the development of digital art and virtual worlds, focusing on the creation of art related to the virtual world of the future. His artworks cover a wide range of styles, from Kung Fu ink painting to Hong Kong style, as well as virtual icons and avatars. He was one of the first experts to create art using 3D, virtual worlds, game engines and animation software. His artworks are multi-layered, reflecting the interaction between the virtual and real worlds. He emphasizes the impact of virtual worlds and the development of digital technology on art, and points out that digital art has gradually become an important form of cultural expression.

Non-fungible Tokens (NFTs) driven by blockchain technology was once the talk of the town. Vincent Yeung believes that with the rise of NFTs, the art market is undergoing a revolution, allowing more young



people to participate in it, rather than just being a playground for wealthy art enthusiasts. When asked if he would create NFTs, he emphasized the importance of creativity in artistic creation, and that the value of a work does not only depend on whether or not it is presented in the form of NFTs.

Future Metaverse Art: New Tech and Avatarism

Recently, Vincent Yeung began to explore the concept of "Avatarism" as a virtual artist. He has created a number of virtual artists of different styles, ages, and nationalities, each with their own unique styles and characteristics. These virtual artists represent his different creative identities and allow him to create art in different ways. He believes that the future of metaverse art will be diverse, and that AI-driven

art will be an important direction for development.

Vincent Yeung's journey as an artist is full of surprises and new experiments, and he firmly believes that the future of the metaverse will be driven by collaborations between AI and human artists, helping artists break boundaries and create more innovative and stunning works of art. Vincent Yeung's views and predictions provide an exciting outlook on the future of metaverse art, and he believes that virtual worlds and digital technologies will democratize digital art creation, and allow audiences to participate and experience art in a deeper fashion.

ERIC CHENG KIN-WO MASTER ARTIST TAKES HONG KONG COMICS TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

BY ANN LEE,
TIMOTHY TAN

Eric Cheng Kin-Wo, Chief Editor of classic Hong Kong comic series such as *Chinese Hero: Tales of the Blood Sword – The Prequel* and *Journey to the West*, is also well known for his contributions to classic works such as *The Legend of the Demon God* and *The God of Wushu* and the *Phoenix* since the 1990s. Since 2006, he has set up his own comic book publishing house Bookone, acting as Chief Editor of *Fire Dragon*, *Path of the Killer*, *Monster Road*, among others. Notably, Cheng's *Journey to the West* is one of the rare Hong Kong originated animation stories that can make it to the international stage, having been adapted into a 16-episode 3D animation web series *The Westward* by Tencent Pictures and Baiman Culture; the series has been renewed for its 4th season, and has been regarded as the "pinnacle of Chinese comics and animation". Having won the Bronze Prize at the International Comic Book Awards in Japan, better known as the "Nobel Prize" in the international comic book industry, his passion for comic book creation is deeply imprinted in every brushstroke, character, and frame that he offers to readers on a weekly basis. Although his team will be disbanded in 2023 due to insufficient comic sales, his brilliant story highlights the overlooked potential of Hong Kong comics, and unparalleled creativity of Hong Kong artists.

CGGE: You've been working on comics for so many years, do you have any favourite projects? Or is there any project that you think is a milestone?



Cheng: There are some projects that I've done that have left a strong impression on me. The first is *Legend of the Gods*, which is more popular than my previous projects. The second one is *When Geek Meets Serial Killer*, which is my first attempt at short films; I've done a few more since then, but I've never done anything like this before, so I think it's a rather bold attempt. There is also *Journey to the West*, which led to more people in Mainland China learning about my work.

CGGE: Can you tell us the story behind the creation of *Journey to the West*? Or the inspiration behind it?

Cheng: At the beginning, I had a very interesting idea. *Journey to the West* is not a new story, many people have adapted it. Despite all the changes I've seen, all of them were about the pilgrimage to the West, but it seemed like no one had ever talks about what happened after the Sutra was retrieved, so why don't I create something from this perspective? I wanted to try to develop this concept into a story, and I have been working on it for many years now.

My story is about what happened after

the brothers reunited after they came back from the Western pilgrimage. I was responsible for the storyline, the storyboards, and Tang Chi Fai was responsible for illustration.

Journey to the West is more of a traditional Hong Kong comic book, where James Wong established the creative process. Our process goes: I think of the story first, and then I make a draft. Then my colleague will work on the scenery, the flowers, the weapons, and so on; afterwards, we tidy up the draft, erase the pencil marks, clean it up a bit, and then scan it with the machine. The original is scanned into the computer, and the black and white lines are then taken to a colleague for computer analysis, and then coloured and sent to the printer; this completes the process.

We still draw by hand, so we can leave a manuscript, but if we go all electronic, the work will only be an electronic file. Nowadays, young people mainly draw on computers or tablets. Both media are good in their own way: computers are faster and more convenient, but there is no such thing as an "original copy", which has its own charm.

CGGE: Covid-19 had a big impact on the Hong Kong's comics industry, how do you think the industry should tide over this difficult time?

Cheng: I think we still need to transform; it's getting more and more difficult for us to sell comics on the street. There are several aspects, firstly, the number of outlets is decreasing,





and there are very few newsstands in Hong Kong. There's also too much entertainment taking up people's time. You might first consider Netflix, YouTube, and then if you still have time to spare, then you'll think, "Ah, I want to read comics". There are a lot of competing products, so if you want to survive, you need to transform.

CGGE: Have you ever thought of selling your comics online and letting people subscribe to them?

Cheng: I've thought about it, and I might try it sometime in the future. However, the readers of our traditional comics have their own ecology, that is to say, they have their own consumption habits, so the online version may not be able to get them to buy, so we still need to think of other ways.

CGGE: Can you give some advice to young people who want to join the industry?

Cheng: I first joined a local comics company. At that time, there were very few choices for those who liked to do comics, there were very few media channels, and the comics industry was not well established. I worked in a traditional comics company for a few years, and then I got some opportunities to try my hand at being a lead writer and editor. But if we talk about the current situation, it's much easier for young people to make comics nowadays because there are many publication channels, especially online. I think the boundaries of media have become more blurred nowadays. There is integration of novels, comics and animation; for example, if you like to write stories, you can write a story and

put it on the internet, or if you like to draw, you can draw it and put it on the internet. It's easy to show your work to others online. I think young people can try many directions on their own, and make more stories, so that people can see them without having to think about the hassle of "getting into the industry" and so on.

CGGE: What do you think is the biggest difference between Hong Kong comics creators and overseas comics creators? With the decline of the publishing industry, and the comics industry being no exception, what do you think is the advantage of Hong Kong's comics nowadays?

Cheng: I think the mainland market is new and big. Hong Kong's comics industry has been operating for many years, and there are some production

have Chinese elements, and while they are not completely westernised, they also have some modern Western ideas. Is an advantage of Hong Kong as a crossroads of Chinese and Western cultures?

Cheng: Yes, I think Hong Kong is bolder in terms of creation, probably because Hong Kong has been under the influence of the West for a long time, and our ability to find new things within the traditional framework is stronger. But now the Mainland is changing very fast, I think we are getting more and more alike. They're progressing fast, but there are also a lot of newcomers in Hong Kong.

CGGE: What is the future of comics and animation in Hong Kong?

Sze: Many production houses have stopped paper-based publishing. The whole media and platform environment in the world has changed. There used

to be a lot of newspaper stalls and teahouses in Hong Kong. In the past, there were newspaper stalls where there were teahouses, but now the teahouses have been replaced by churches and fitness centres, and the newspaper stalls have declined, and we were very saddened by that. While there were 3,000 newspaper stalls in the past, there are now only 300 left, so when we want to take our comics books to newspaper stalls to be sold, it's very difficult.

The development model of anime and manga has been done by many people before, creating and then turning into animation and comics. This is what the Japanese industry is like, and in the case of Marvel, it started before the Second World War, and the model hasn't changed. But what will happen in the next decade depends on the development of Web 3.0.



features that are popular in the mainland market, but now I think it's harder to maintain these markets, and I'm referring to the likes of "Journey to the West". But there are also newcomers in Hong Kong who are not doing our type of comics, everyone is evolving.

Sze: Hong Kong's comics have a long history and have influenced the Mainland. Hong Kong's creativity has its own special characteristics. The education in Mainland China and Hong Kong is different, and Hong Kong is more daring in terms of thinking, while we are more like Korea's new creative model. Hong Kong's influence on the comics and animation industry is not inferior to Japan's in Asia, and its influence on China is also very great.

CGGE: Works like *Journey to the West*





THE STORY OF CHINA'S YANGTZE RIVER DANCE WITH THE FINLESS PORPOISE

SOURCE: GLOBAL DIGITAL CREATIONS

The first part of a trilogy of Yangtze River animated films, *Dance With The Finless Porpoise* (2023) ("Dance") is a beautiful Chinese-style animated film. It combines traditional Chinese culture and modern elements and uses the porpoise as the animated character to depict the legendary story that takes place at Shizhong Mountain in Hukou, where Poyang Lake, the largest freshwater lake in China, and the Yangtze River meet. The film builds a fantasy world under and above the Yangtze River and tells the story of Jiangling, a fairy, who searches for the unknown land "Yunmengze" to save the endangered porpoise.

Dance is inspired by the unique scene of the Yangtze River basin where the 'porpoise worships the wind' and the interpretation of folklore stories,

allowing the audience to follow the perspective of the porpoise to see our human world and feel more deeply that all things have a living spirit and peacefully coexist in this world. It expresses the concept of protecting the endangered Yangtze finless porpoise, preserving the ecology of the Yangtze River, and conveying the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature!

The film, which took five years to create, is jointly invested in and produced by Shenzhen Global Digital Creations Film and Television Co. Ltd., Jiangxi Culture and Performing Arts Development Group, and Jiangxi Hukou Shizhongshan Cultural Tourism Development Group Co., Ltd. The film is expected to be released in Chinese theaters nationwide in 2023 and will be produced in multiple languages for global distribution.

Character design: The Smiling angel
Global Digital Creations first chose to

develop the porpoise as the character for their new animation because of its dorky smile, which has given it the nickname 'Smiling Angel of Yangtze'. The finless porpoise is a unique aquatic mammal living in the Yangtze River, with a body length of 1.2 to 1.9 meters. From the Yangtze River Three Gorges to the Shanghai estuary, the dolphins have been found in the waters of 7 provinces across China, and cannot be bred in captivity. Currently, only 1012 finless porpoises remain, and they are even rarer than the national treasure, the Giant Panda. The finless porpoise may be on the verge of extinction in the next decade and is protected at the national level.

The creative team traveled along the Yangtze River to collect cultural material and conduct research. They set up the porpoise's character as the guardian of the Yangtze River and expressed the changes of the Yangtze River through the perspective of the porpoise. The creative team was

recommended by experts in porpoise conservation from the Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology (SEE) and the Changjiang Conservation Foundation (CCF) to visit the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, where Hukou County, Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province are situated, to conduct more research. Hukou is the confluence of Poyang Lake and Yangtze River, and more than half of the Yangtze River's remaining finless porpoises live in this area, which is beneficial to the creative team's in-depth exploration and deep understanding of finless porpoises and Yangtze River ecology.

Finless porpoises have been living in the Yangtze River for 180,000 years. Based on real porpoises, the creative team designed a porpoise spirit with the power to control the water and shapeshift into human beings and selected the most representative water creatures among more than 400 kinds of water creatures living in the Yangtze River. In the form of folk tales and legends, they designed many characters as spirits thriving in the underwater realm of the Yangtze River.

A Fantastical interpretation of history

A legendary story taking place on Shizhong Mountain, where Poyang Lake and Yangtze River meet, is told in "Dance With The Finless Porpoise", enacting the fantastical love between humans and porpoises that happened from the Tang Dynasty, Ming Dynasty to the modern day in a county.

During the creation of the screenplay, the creative team researched the geography, hydrology, and local history of the Yangtze River basin to build a trilogy of Yangtze River-themed films that overlap in time and space, forming the world of the Yangtze River and its underwater creatures. The film's characters overlap in a series of stories that take place in different eras, from the perspective of a porpoise fairy who guards the Yangtze River and participates in its historical evolution and changing relationship with humans.

In the first movie "Dance With The Finless Porpoise", Jiangling, a porpoise fairy from the underwater world beneath the Yangtze River, comes to Shizhong Mountain in search of a

missing baby porpoise. The mountain is in Jiangxi Hukou, where the rivers and lakes meet, and where the famous Chinese poet Su Shi wrote "Travel Notes To Shizhong Mountain" during his night trip. After accidentally meeting a human youth who helped to rescue the baby porpoise, a story that begins with a misunderstanding towards humans that eventually leads to humans and porpoises working together to protect their home unfolds in the movie. The film combines history and legend to tell the story of the

Yangtze River in time and space across 660 years. The story describes the tales that took place in landmarks such as the splendid waters of Yangtze River and Poyang Lake, Shizhong Mountain with its ethereal bells, Fairy Mountain in the middle of a lake, 'Eastern Bermuda' water tornado, and the most beautiful water highway in China.

Technological innovation and a unique style

Global Digital Creations is the first high-tech film and television company





in China to invest in the creation of full-length 3D animation films, with cutting-edge digital computer animation technology to create "Chinese style" animation art effect films, including the digital three-dimensional presentation of traditional ink style, Chinese painting style, shadow puppet style with innovative visual effects.

In "Dance With The Finless Porpoise", the Global Digital Creations creative team sought artistic techniques from the traditional Chinese painting style, including borrowing from the colorful pictographs often used in Tang Dynasty murals, making yet another attempt at innovation. The rock paintings were used to describe and present the mythological scenes about the legends of the Yangtze River and the Yunneng River. After many cultural exploration trips to the Jiangxi region, the art design team stylized the unique style of the architecture, and the fine and flowing costumes of the characters, and incorporated traditional fashion

elements into hairstyles and hair accessories according to local culture. The film presents a beautiful art scroll of landscape and culture for the contemporary youth, instilling in them a greater awareness of Eastern aesthetics and Chinese aesthetics.

Around mid-production, the animation production team studied character gestures, manners, and other details of performance that are characteristic of different eras to portray personality and emotion. By constantly experimenting with artistic effects with technology, a unique animation style is created. As for the production process, Global Digital Creation's animated film team adopted the Hollywood production workflow to ensure a high technological standard and strict quality control for the finished product.

Dance With The Finless Porpoise is a new step taken by Global Digital Creations to explore the cultural elements of the Yangtze River that represent a side of Chinese culture

and narrate the Chinese story with animation. The film is based on realistic local landscapes and the beautiful scenery of mountains and rivers, and the artistic interpretation of regional characteristics and their charms has also received strong support from the co-producers Jiangxi Culture and Performing Arts Development Group and Jiangxi Hukou Shizhongshan Cultural Tourism Development Group Co., Ltd., which will jointly comprehensively promote the film. As a leading animation film and television enterprise, Global Digital Creations has utilized local government resources and collaborated with leading enterprises to build a new cultural infrastructure through the creation of an IP with local characteristics, integrating the animation industry with local cultural tourism, forging an innovative development path of "animation film and television + digital cultural tourism".

In the creation of the second and third movie sequels, technological innovation is taken a step further through attempts to utilize Unreal Engine UE technology and artificial intelligence-assisted creation AIGC mode to build city-level animation and apply metaverse digital characters and landscapes, as well as digital IP derivatives. We hope to take the audience on a journey through animation, to enjoy a fantastical visual experience in both virtuality and reality and steadily achieve establishing a metaverse with the Chinese Yangtze River animation IP!



**ANIMATION
GLOBAL**

UPGRADING HONG KONG'S WORKFORCE WITH DECT THE SUCCESS OF THE EMPLOYEE RETRAINING BOARD

BY: CATINA YIU

Krystal Institute's first Employees Retraining Board (ERB) course, the Creative Digital Media Course, was successfully launched in June 2021.

It was a significant milestone for the company, and it is also a step forward toward our mission: providing upward mobility opportunities for people in Hong Kong.

The survey reports (conducted jointly with Hong Kong Productivity Council and CreateHK in 2015 and 2018) released by Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association (HKDEA) showed that an increasing number of companies in the digital industry call for relevant parties and authorities to take action and meet the necessary demands in strengthening industry training and funding joint research and development of colleges and the industry. It is not hard to tell that the demand for training services in the digital industry is tremendous.

Alongside that, we observed that people in Hong Kong are seeking an affordable training program to achieve self-enhancement and skill upgrades. In this situation, to reskill Hong Kong's creative

industry, Krystal Institute has worked with ERB to offer free and subsidized vocational training courses. We first launched creative digital media courses, followed by courses including Python web framework development and front-end and back-end development.

So far we have launched 5 courses in ERB. They are all under the theme of DECT and have covered the knowledge of design, project management, core technologies for digital media, and development technologies. The training offered by those courses is an excellent opportunity for students to broaden their horizons and learn the latest software to adapt to the changes in the digital economy.

We insist on cultivating technical talents for the industry and making contributions to the community. Our programs have no limits on students' academic backgrounds, and people with diverse backgrounds and experiences are provided with equal opportunities to learn and upgrade themselves here. Moreover, students will receive a stipend for learning, this little extra push encourages students to sign up for our courses and gain tools for life. It is delightful to see 70-80% of graduates are employed in relevant fields after studying our programs and



get connected with potential employers, representing a new start to their career.





EMPOWERING OUR FUTURE LEADERS REINVENTING EDUCATION AMIDST THE ERA OF DIGITIZATION

BY: CATINA YIU

Thanks to Hong Kong's notorious education system, students are under high pressure in schools and private tuition classes with endless exams and assignments every day. Waking up at 7, going to school at 8, joining extra curriculum activities after 5, and going back home at 8 at night, are the true reflections of a hectic day as a Hong Kong student.

Governmental statistics show the overall daily learning time of local primary and secondary students is 10 hours on average, including school time (about 7 hours a day), tuition classes (about 0.7

hours a day), and homework time after school (about 2.4 hours for primary 4-6 students and about 1.9 hours for secondary 1-3 students). In other words, students spend more than 55 hours studying on average per week.

There is no doubt that getting distinguished academic performance is for the betterment of students' lives in the future. However, besides traditional subjects in schools, young children need to be equipped with digital skills and creative mindsets to excel in the digitalized future.

The arrival of Industry 4.0 creates diverse job types and leads to a new digital economy with tremendous business opportunities. In that situation,



digital skills are indispensable for students to survive in the digital economy.

Digital skills are defined as abilities to utilize digital devices, software, and networks for creating digital content and managing digital tasks in schools and workplaces. In the future, knowledge, skills, and tools will be indispensable prerequisites for students to compete in the economy.

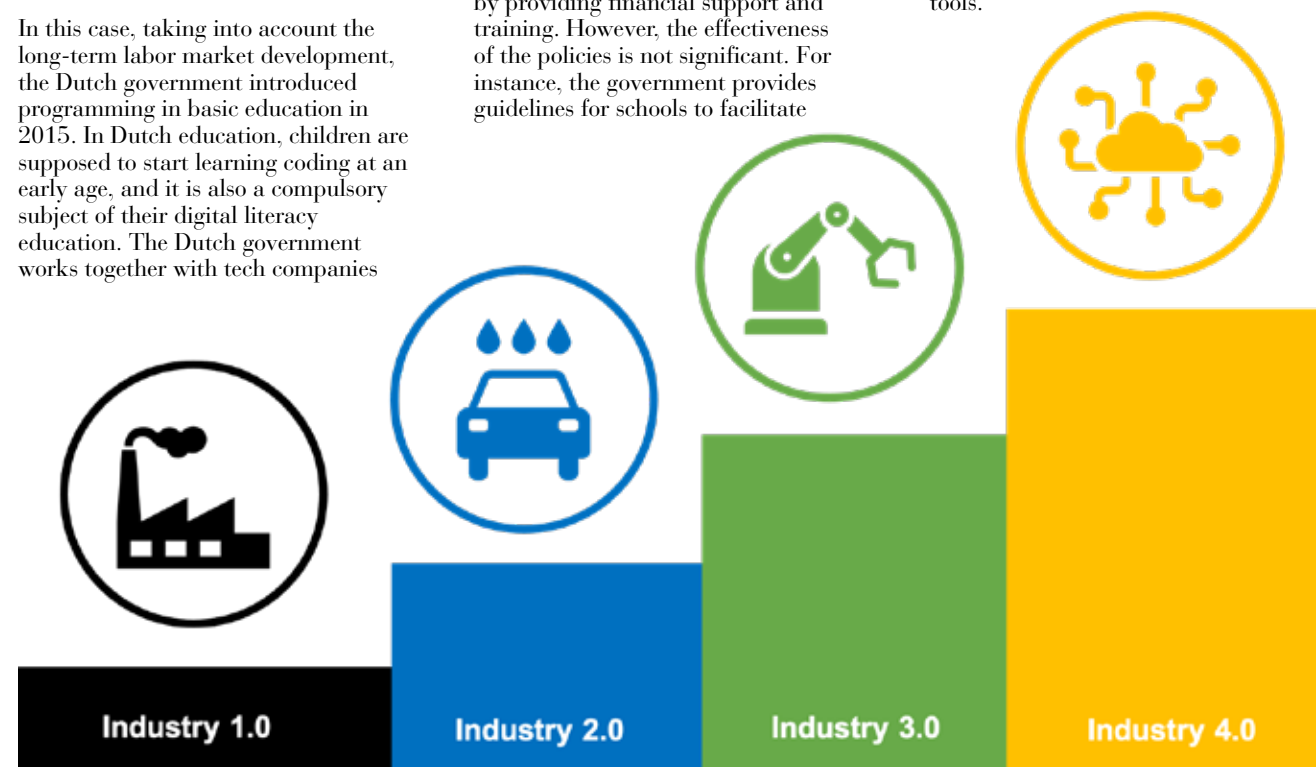
In this case, taking into account the long-term labor market development, the Dutch government introduced programming in basic education in 2015. In Dutch education, children are supposed to start learning coding at an early age, and it is also a compulsory subject of their digital literacy education. The Dutch government works together with tech companies

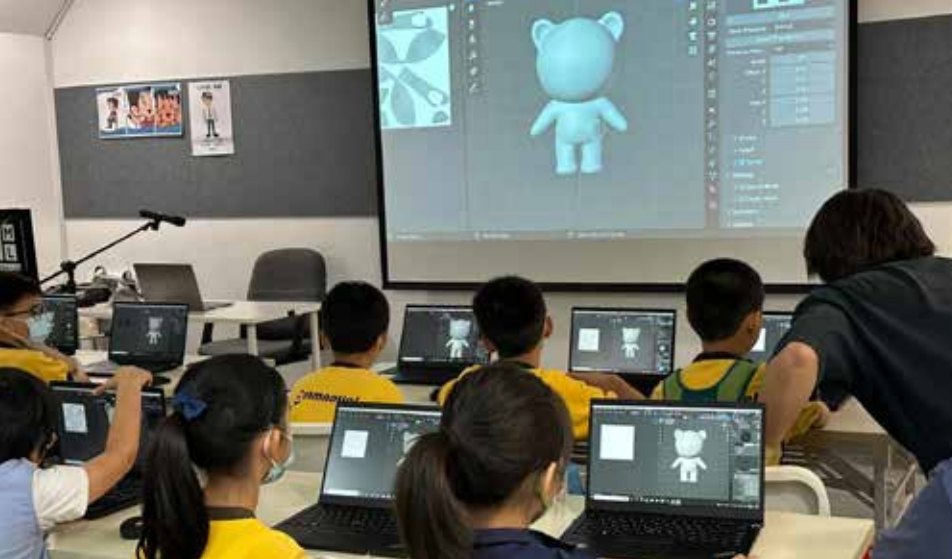
to provide support to schools, they believe that teaching programming is a great approach to developing students' creativity and critical and computational thinking. In addition, programming education develops talent and will alleviate the shortage of programmers in the Dutch job market in the future.

Shifting our attention back to Hong Kong, the local government has been dedicated to promoting STEM education by providing financial support and training. However, the effectiveness of the policies is not significant. For instance, the government provides guidelines for schools to facilitate

STEM course development in Primary 4-6, while does not train the teachers' systematically, leaving them not familiar with STEM teaching.

To nurture the next generations with a great learning environment and unleash their potential and vitality in the digital economy, we provide them with our DECT educational programs, which include K-12 curricula with an assortment of free creative software tools.





Krystal Institute took our steps towards localizing the digital economy education program with our partnering associations. We first trialed our DECT curricula in primary and secondary schools to efficiently promote the importance of digital skills in society, followed by holding 10-hour self-run Blender summer and winter camps.

To enhance students' interests in diversified learning and deliver

the importance of technological innovations in schools, we launched a comprehensive 3-Year DECT Model Primary School Program. The program curricula are closely aligned with the EDB teaching guidelines. It enhances elementary school curricula rather than replacing them and cross-disciplinary courses let students unleash creativity in the realm of digital creation and programming. By integrating in-class teaching, extra-curricular activities,

and CPD training for teachers, the participating schools will become model schools in digital education.

With the uphold the philosophy of "Empowering the people and bridging the global digital divide", our "Train-the-Trainers" program systematically improves teachers' digital knowledge using DECT curricula and upgrades their skills. As a result, students will benefit from the digital knowledge, skills, and tools they learned to achieve all-around development.

Being resilient and resourceful is necessary for our future pillars (these young students) to adapt to the rapid changes in the era of digitalization. The knowledge, skills, and tools of the digital economy will benefit students in schools and workplaces in the future. At the moment, the education industry needs to make a change by providing a more comprehensive education and training program to lay the groundwork for teaching digital literacy in Hong Kong.



INSPIRING INNOVATION MASTERING THE INTERSECTION OF AI AND CREATIVITY



SOURCE: KRystal INSTITUTE

In a world where data abundance and rapid computation converges, Artificial Intelligence has swiftly evolved into a transformative force shaping industries and economies.

Recent insights from IBM's "Global AI Adoption Index 2022" reveal a significant uptick in AI deployment, with 53% of IT professionals reporting increased adoption over the past 24 months. This surge signals AI's potential to drive innovation across industries.

In this dynamic landscape, where AI is redefining sectors from industrial to creative, we find ourselves at the crossroads of innovation and imagination. AI is poised to revolutionize art and design, media creation, system development, and product management.

Krystal Institute's Masters programs are meticulously designed to empower aspiring artists, educators and engineers, unleashing their creativity and reimagining industries. Learners are going to acquire the distinctive skills and integrate AI into creative and development and management process seamlessly, as well as nurturing

their expertise on different areas. They are able to foster interdisciplinary collaborations and establish standards to guide the next generation of creative professionals and scholars.

We are seeking inventive educational and industrial partners to support us on our mission to supply new talent to an emerging sector. We welcome all to join us on this exhilarating journey, where we unveil the realm of AI and craft a more inventive future through your contributions.





REVOLUTIONIZE CREATIVE DESIGN WITH AI MASTERS DEGREE IN AI COMPUTER GRAPHICS PRODUCTION

As an AI Computer Graphics Production Artist, you stand at the forefront of a technological revolution that is profoundly reshaping the landscape of art and design. The fusion of human creativity with the immense potential of artificial intelligence is not merely a collaboration, it is a transformation.

AI algorithms can easily analyze vast datasets of artistic styles, enabling you to seamlessly blend, reimagine, and even transcend traditional artistic techniques, by creating captivating illustrations and images in seconds. AI is a new creative medium that expands creative boundaries and streamlines creative processes, allowing you to unleash your creativity and amplify



your expressiveness in AI's vast possibilities.

Studying in the Masters Program can build upon your prior knowledge in creative design, enabling you to experiment and innovate with

newfound AI-driven and creative design tools. Join us and become innovators at the cutting edge and bring inspiring innovations to various industries.

DESIGNING THE FUTURE WITH INNOVATION MASTERS DEGREE IN AI COMPUTER GRAPHICS PRODUCTION ENGINEERING

Diving into the world of AI Computer Graphics Production Engineering, pioneers wield the knowledge and tools to craft the realm of innovation and artistry. AI serves as a creative catalyst, enabling you to harness AI and machine learning to design tools and systems that tackle complex real-world challenges across various industries.

Nowadays, AI's impact extends into diverse fields, and AI Computer Graphics Production Engineers play a vital role in developing optimized, accurate tools that accelerate the creative process. Across different media such as images, video, virtual worlds, and immersive experiences, Generative AI solutions can harness

artists' creativity while enhancing efficiency and quality. New ideas and developments emerge daily that Production Engineers must capture for AI CG Artists to deploy into creative projects.

Upon completing the course, you will be well-equipped to handle intricate

production requirements, tackle industry-specific problems, and make contributions to the creative process within any organization. Your expertise will be instrumental in shaping a more efficient, interconnected world.





ARCHITECTING THE FUTURE OF VISUALS MASTERS DEGREE IN AI COMPUTER GRAPHICS PRODUCTION SYSTEM ENGINEERING

Embark on a transformative journey as an AI Computer Graphics Production System Engineer, you will be able to gain expertise in a wide array of areas and continually explore new technologies and techniques to enhance AI production processes.

In the era of AI-driven technologies, optimizing production processes is crucial to ensure that AI systems perform at their best, reducing resource wastage, increasing productivity. Production workflows have evolved from traditional waterfall styles to AGILE methodologies, but require reimagining for the era of Generative AI. Therefore, AI Computer Graphics Production System Engineers play



a vital role in designing reliable systems to ensure smooth integration between AI components and existing infrastructure, allowing organizations to leverage AI effectively.

By the end of the course, you will be able to gain their expertise in a wide array of areas, including advanced

programming skills, efficient processes and workflow management, mastery the maintenance and development of production, familiarity with system and platform development tools, and the ability to develop AI systems.

UNLOCKING AI FOR ARTS AND MANAGEMENT MASTERS DEGREE IN AI COMPUTER GRAPHIC PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT AND ENGINEERING

Step into the future of AI Computer Graphics Production Management and Engineering, developing robust knowledge and skills in creative, technical and management aspects will lead you to the cutting edge of AI-driven technologies.

AI Computer Graphics Production Managers and Engineers play a pivotal role in harnessing AI's capabilities to create, enhance, and optimize visual content within AI-driven technologies. They are responsible for implementing AI-driven automation tools, which streamline workflows and reduce manual labor, making production

processes more efficient. They contribute to promoting efficiency, innovation, and quality across various sectors, merging traditional management frameworks and methods with advanced process management tools.

Additionally, they are responsible for

nurturing skills in resource allocation and integrating the creative process with technological advancements to excel in managing and leading projects in the dynamic field of AI Computer Graphics production.





EXCELLING IN THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS MASTERS DEGREE IN ENTERPRISE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

In an AI era marked by the rapid progression of digitization, the significance of digital transformation cannot be overstated. Digital transformation, at its core, represents the fundamental shift in how businesses and enterprises operate and interact in an increasingly interconnected world. It encapsulates the adoption of cutting-edge technologies to enhance efficiency, optimize customer experiences, drive innovation, and manage business operations.

By equipping learners with skills and knowledge in essential AI and machine learning concepts, alongside web development and programming skills, they can gain proficiency in harnessing collaborative and cutting-



edge technologies, such as ERP systems and open-source tools, and deeply integrate them with AI technologies into enterprise ecosystems.

As learners progress, they focus on specialization and real-world application, preparing themselves to lead in the AI-enhanced digital

economy while also positioning themselves to spearhead change, innovation, and disruption in the industries of tomorrow.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LEARNING WITH AI MASTERS DEGREE IN AI EDUCATION

As we stand at the intersection of technology and education in the digital age, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education is poised to become a transformative force. Offering a visionary glimpse into the future of learning to educators, which benefits them to be well-equipped with the knowledge and skills to harness AI and AIGC in creative design, web development, and educational technology (EdTech).

AI presents an innovative approach for educators, carrying significant implications for the education sector, promising to reshape the way we teach and learn, with a more inclusive learning environment. Analysis of

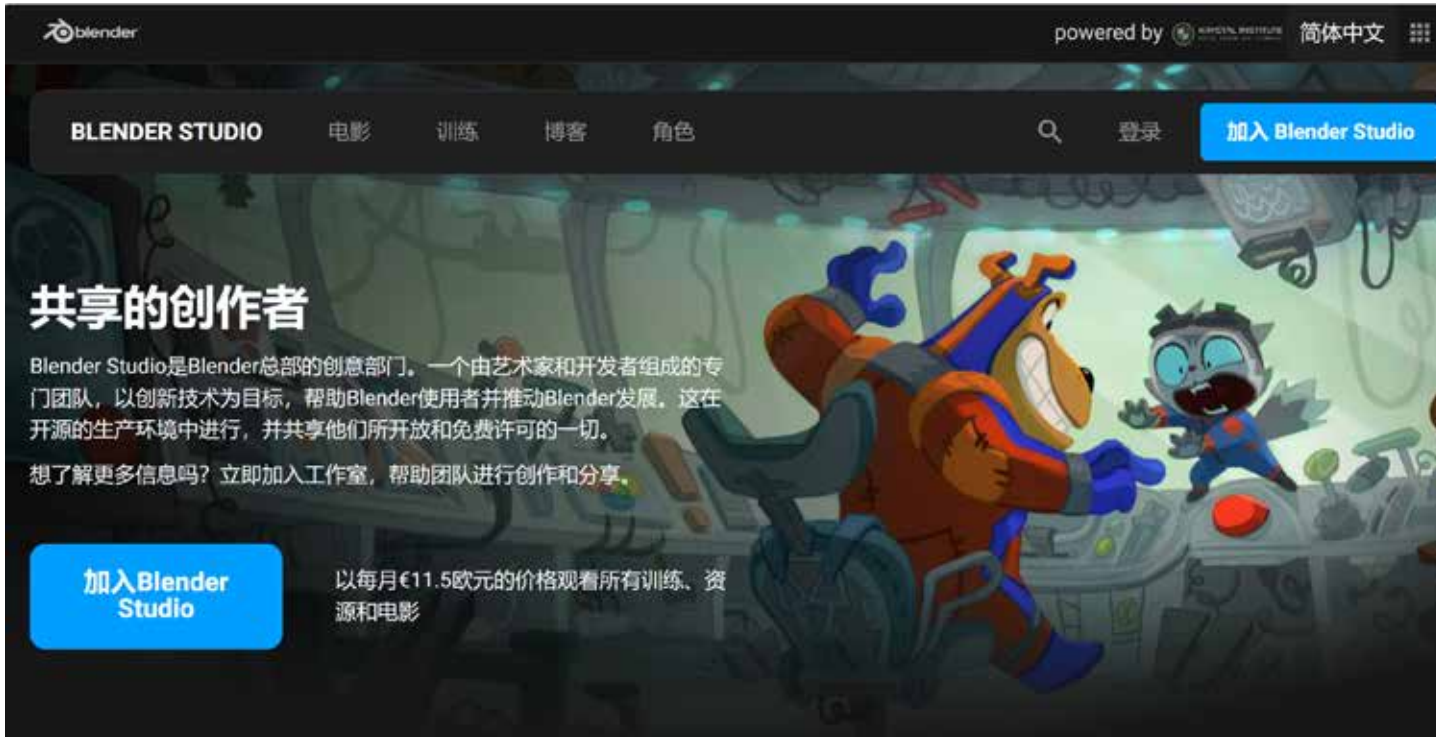
data collected from a tech-empowered learning experience will create personalized learning experiences for future students.

Through AI-enhanced creative design, AI integration in web development and AI-powered EdTech tools, educator can explore limitlessly for adaptive

and efficient educational approaches, aligning perfectly with the demands of the digital economy, fostering a more engaging and effective learning experience.



THE BRAND NEW BLENDER STUDIO NOW IN CHINESE



BY: RAYMOND D. NEOH

Blender is a 3D modeling and animation software with an intuitive system and interface. For aspiring CG artists, or professionals looking to expand their animation and modeling toolkit, Blender Studio (previously Blender Cloud) is a comprehensive learning platform to understand the basics of 3D animation and get excellent, trusted resources published by the Blender Foundation.

Blender Studio was introduced in 2014 and served as an educational platform to help further promote the Blender software and raise funds for the Blender Foundation. With its developments over the years, Blender

Studio has expanded its offerings into a comprehensive list of content and services, which can be helpful for all levels of users to master the system to its fullest potential. The main contents of Blender Studio are divided into the following five areas: Films, Blogs, Training, Libraries, and Other Services.

With a monthly subscription of €11.50, you can be a member of Blender Studio and enjoy a massive amount of high-quality content on the platform.

Films: Behind-the-scenes access to open-movie production

In 2006, the Blender Foundation founded the Blender Institute and concurrently launched many creative open projects. Over the years, the Blender Institute has commissioned

multiple open films and games, driving continuous innovation in the community.

Blender Studio offers exclusive access to all production files, assets, and artwork from 18 open movies plus never-seen-before content for upcoming projects. The opportunity to go through production logs, browse and work with project files and assets, and observe the talented animation process by Blender Studio artists up close is undoubtedly an inspiring journey for learners.

Courses & Tutorials: Comprehensive training at all levels

Courses and tutorials on Blender Studio are wonderful resources for animation learners. While there are many free Blender tutorials on YouTube or

Bilibili, these guides are often limited to bits and pieces of Blender operation, rather than going through the whole process of a project. In that sense, it is difficult for learners to have an immersive experience.

Blender Studio instead offers a package of tutorials in which you can see artists explain not only how to use Blender, but also a complete demonstration of the entire workflow of a project, including character animation, asset creation, and visual effects composition.

Professional artists from the Blender Institute like Julien Kaspar and Gleb Alexandrov explain Blender patiently, talking about topics ranging from 3D modeling and basic animation to expert sculpting, and shader creation, with a hallmark casual and humorous style.

Learners from all levels can determine their suitable starting point for further learning. Lessons are composed of animation fundamentals, character workflows, procedural shader tutorials, and much more advanced knowledge of film and animation production in Blender. Most importantly, learners get access to the source files used in the lessons; .blend model files can be incorporated into one's training, creating a truly interactive learning experience.

Libraries: Thousands of 3D assets and textures

Scholars often resort to libraries for a deeper understanding of the research they are working on. Similarly, the Libraries on Blender Studio offer extensive resources for animation learners. You can find useful tools and plugins created by others in the Blender community, and virtual assets to get you started in your Blender projects. These materials are fully included in the Blender studio membership, available to download anytime, enriching your animation toolbox.

With a plethora of content, including HDR images up to 16K and 24 EVs, 1500+ high-quality textures, and high-quality characters, Libraries on Blender Studio offer a fast track to animation proficiency.

HDR IMAGES

Up to 16K and 24 EVs HDRi to enhance your renders.

Myanmar
Indoor

Skies
See all HDRis >



TEXTURES

More than 1500 public-domain textures.

Metal
Wood

Bricks
See all Textures >



Sample of storyboard for open film Spring (2019)



The Libraries on Blender Studio store the wonderful works from artists all over the world.



With the Private Projects feature, Blender Studio helps you manage the pipelines and materials of your projects. It allows you to upload all your .blend file's elements, materials, and assets directly to the Cloud. Attract, offers task management, multiple user assignments, and due dates, as well as activity logs. You can have a more scheduled workflow with the two helpers.

Another strong add-on is Blender Sync,

which allows you to sync your user preferences across different devices and different versions of Blender. It is like a small toolbox that can be carried around and used at any time because it takes up almost no space. Save your configurations once, and use them anywhere.

Blender Studio for Chinese Users

The services of Blender Studio have benefited a lot of animators for years. For those who are not very good at English, the rich content seems a bit

within sight but beyond reach. In that situation, Krystal Institute collaborates with Blender Institute to provide the Chinese Version of Blender Studio, giving a seamless opportunity for Chinese animators to learn animation production.

For non-native English speakers, it is always more smooth to understand the tutorials with the subtitles of their mother language. In this Chinese version project, we provide a whole set of Chinese subtitles that not only translate the workflow of those videos but also the explanations of various buttons and features in Blender UI.

In addition, we include a special feature named Tag Tracking in the Chinese version. We have tagged the key contents each tutorial covered. With this function, users can search out the videos that fall into a broad category or have some connections. Then, they can have a deeper understanding of those knowledge points.

The Chinese version of Blender Studio provides traditional and simplified Chinese subtitles at once, which can



benefit the animators in Greater China. It's a big step forward for the increase of visibility of this excellent open-source software in this region.

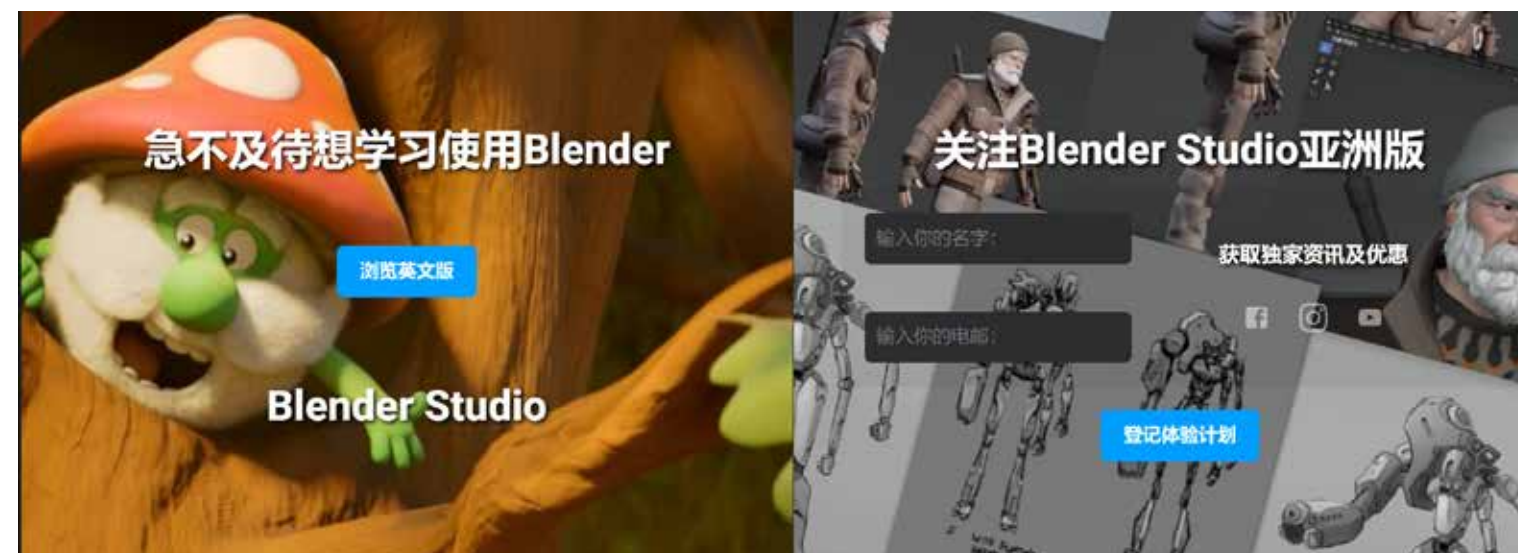
With its free and open-source features, someone said that Blender has democratized the 3D modeling and animation industry. Artists all over the world are using Blender to create fantastic work freely and even have their unique tools like a chef has his personalized cookware.

Said on its official website, Blender Studio is "the creative hub for your projects, powered by Free and Open Source Software". With courses covering every major topic in Blender, Blender Studio gives you a playground to explore and grow your expertise in animation. With the help of Blender Studio, you can create personalized animation tools. Also, with access to the sharing experience of talented artists, you are inspired to create good works like them.

So, sign up as a member of Blender Studio and enjoy being a part of the talented community right now!



<https://blenderstudio.cn>





FOSTERING TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS BLENDER 3D EDUCATION INITIATIVES

BY: RAYMOND D. NEOH

As a visionary and aspiring educational institution, Krystal Institute looks forward to greeting the era of digitalization and new technologies. We insist on cultivating young talents by equipping them with digital knowledge, skills, and tools, unleashing their creativity, and preparing them to make contributions to the industry in the future.

3D worlds, animation, visualization, and simulation are some of the most important emerging technologies that our next generation should master. To enhance children's interest in learning the latest 3D technologies, we strive to produce gamified, interactive, and engaging curricula, which we first piloted in primary schools and secondary schools. Our Train-the-Trainer Program, operating in parallel, is designed to seamlessly assist

educators in integrating our digital tools into their daily teaching methods, empowering them to facilitate effective learning experiences. Understanding the importance of scientific teaching, we adhere strictly to the pedagogical principles set forth by the Hong Kong Education Bureau.

In the past, we successfully launched self-run Summer Camps focused on teaching Blender to primary students. This year, we worked in tandem with our partner, EIRI-GBA, and provided a 12-hour Blender course with a captivating theme rooted in Chinese traditional culture. Primary students showed their enthusiasm for learning Blender, resulting in the creation of fascinating 3D animated videos. To date, we have successfully taught over 500 students from local schools and instilled in schools, teachers, and students an awareness of the importance of continuous learning in the face of rapid technological innovations.

International Alliance of Blender Educators (IABE)

The International Alliance of Blender Educators (IABE) is a dynamic global initiative that strives to educate and inspire the next generation of Computer Graphics (CG) artists using the powerful Blender platform. With a steadfast commitment to standardized education, certification programs, and fostering student engagement, IABE plays a vital role within the Blender community. We nurture talent, broaden access to education, and ensure that industry standards are upheld, thereby contributing to the continued growth and excellence of Blender practitioners worldwide.

IABE will promote accessible Blender education through the following projects:

Standardized, Modular Curriculum: Developing a standardized Blender curriculum for students aged 8 to 18, ensuring a consistent learning

experience across regions that is sufficiently flexible to cater to the different needs of educators.

Certification Programs: IABE offers certification for educators through its Train-the-Trainer programs, to validate the expertise of Blender educators, enhancing their credibility and professional standing and offering guiding principles to curriculum designers on course development

Qualification Framework: Establishing a structured, goal-oriented framework to ensure accurate assessment of students' performances based on comprehensive learning objectives, for both young and professional learners

Student Engagement: Prioritizing an accessible and engaging learning experience, aiming to inspire and empower the next generation of Blender artists

How will IABE serve the Blender Community?

A globally accepted standard for Blender education will serve to strengthen Blender's already rising popularity around the world, making the learning and teaching experience more accessible to all relevant stakeholders. IABE encourages talent cultivation in communities that lack curriculum resources, allowing aspiring trainers to gain relevant qualifications and transfer knowledge to their students. Moreover, the Alliance can facilitate collaboration within the Blender community among educators, artists, and developers, acting as a nexus for networking, knowledge sharing, and innovation. By connecting players along the CG production value chain, the Alliance opens up new avenues for educators and students, enhancing their employability and recognition in the CG industry; and expanding access to talent for studios and producers.

For students, certification programs validate students' proficiencies in Blender, providing them with a competitive edge in the job market. These certifications serve as tangible proof of their skills, enhancing their resumes and bolstering their confidence to pursue further education in CG. A 'badge' system has been implemented

in many European communities, and we hope to replicate their successes around the world.

For teachers, certification programs acknowledge educators' expertise and dedication to Blender education. In particular, teacher training programs have been conducted by our peers in the UK amongst other regions, and we hope to exchange our experiences in this space to launch even more comprehensive programs in the future. Train-the-Trainer programs contribute to the global standardization of Blender education, establishing a benchmark for evaluating the proficiency of Blender educators, ensuring a high level of instructional quality, and fostering trust, and collaboration within the educational community. Certified teachers gain credibility and recognition within the educational community, leading to increased professional and collaboration opportunities.

Call for Global Participation

Join the International Alliance of Blender Educators (IABE) and help us transform the future of Blender education! By becoming a member of IABE, you will help lead the effort in shaping the future of Blender education and nurturing the next generation of CG artists.

Our commitments and privileges

- **Pedagogical Exchange:** Collaborate with artists and educators around the world to establish a leading qualification framework and

accompanying curriculum for global Blender learners

- **Professional Recognition:** Gain credibility and enhance your professional profile within the global Blender community.
- **Lifelong Digital Learning:** Benefit from a wealth of educational materials, learning resources, workshops, webinars, seminars and exchange programs
- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with educators, artists, and developers from around the world to discover new collaborative opportunities
- **Career Advancements:** Certified educators can teach in diverse educational settings and work with partners all over the world
- **Community Engagement:** Play an active role in community events, collaborations, and knowledge-sharing sessions to foster innovations

For information, visit <https://iabe.io>



<https://iabe.io>



FUTURE ANIMATORS UNITE! INTERNATIONAL BLENDER ANIMATION COMPETITION FOR CHILDREN



BY: RAYMOND D. NEOH

65 % of children entering primary school today will work in new job types that don't yet exist, according to estimates by the World Economic Forum. In preparation for a rapidly changing technological landscape and employment market, adolescents today should equip themselves with resilient, future skills; modeling and animation, with

their rich applications in marketing, design, visualization, simulation, and entertainment, are undoubtedly core skills for participants in the digital economy.

Animators as young as 8 years old are producing high-quality artwork with Blender. To promote widespread usage of the open-source animation tool Blender, CG Global Entertainment (CGGE) proposes an International Blender Animation Competition to help educate and motivate learners from 8 to 17 years old to learn about CG

and its applications. In its inaugural year, the Competition will be hosted in Greater China, and we welcome interested parties, whether they are schools, cultural and educational communities, or NGOs, to join us in our mission to make animation resources accessible to more aspiring artists.

Free modeling and animation resources for future learners

Given the monumental impact that emerging technologies will have on our world, CGGE believes that

access to future-proof knowledge, skills, and tools should be provided to all learners to ignite a passion for creative expression. As such, a free, comprehensive 10 hour curriculum will be provided to all competition participants to learn the core skills required to create an aerospace-related animation reel. Moreover, the Competition will require that all outcomes be produced using the open-source software Blender, to further promote the use of open technologies; any pre-production work such as concept arts, storyboard design, and script-writing, as well as post-production work, including video editing, special effects, and audio editing, should be created using open-source applications.

To accredit learners' achievements during the Competition, CGGE will collaborate with Blender Institute and the International Alliance of Blender Educators to offer certificates of merit to participating students. Excellent performance in the Competition will further yield prizes for students, to be awarded at the International Artificial Intelligence and Creativity Conference, also hosted by CGGE.

Promoting aerospace technology to the next generation

In 2023, China has achieved significant developments, breakthroughs, and innovations in the aerospace field, including the launch of scientific

satellites, satellites for Earth observation, astronomical observation, and more. These achievements encompass satellites such as Fengyun-3 No. 06, Environmental Mitigation No. 06, and the Guishenxing-1 Y7 launch vehicle. The successful launch and operation of these satellites have provided crucial data support for China's research in related fields. Additionally, China has developed new observation equipment and data processing technologies, enhancing the precision and efficiency of space observation.

With these advancements in mind, this project aims to provide students with the opportunity to learn about 3D animation-related knowledge and skills. It encourages students to showcase their creativity through animation works related to space and aerospace technology, celebrating China's significant efforts and achievements in aerospace technology.

Laying the foundation for robust growth in the CG industry

The Competition aims to inspire young animators to explore creativity, push boundaries, and improve their CG animation skills. This provides them a platform to showcase their talent and get recognition for their work, driving fresh talent into the animation industry. CGGE aims to work with media partners across Greater China to broadcast winning artworks across

public channels, raising awareness of the industry among young creators and the public, and highlighting its potential career opportunities and artistic possibilities. Alongside showcasing the creative work of young animators, we will encourage viewers to interact, vote, and provide feedback on entries, fostering a sense of engagement and connection with the animation community.

Placing the spotlight on the potential for young animators' talents can spark interest in animation and technical careers at an early age. Competitions help discover and recognize young, promising animators, bringing together animation industry players, industry professionals, and organizations. By fostering a sense of community and supporting the growth of the animation ecosystem, we hope to leave a lasting impact on participants and the animation community as a whole.

For more information, contact us at info@cgge.media or visit <https://cgge.media>



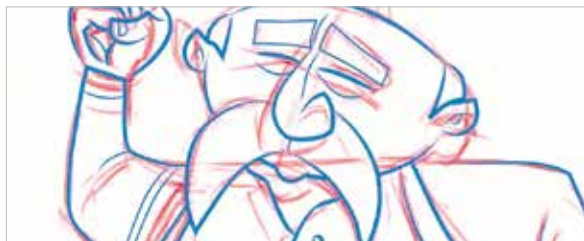
<https://cgge.media>



Blender Studio

Join the production platform used daily by a world-class team of artists and developers

Join us for only €11.50/month!



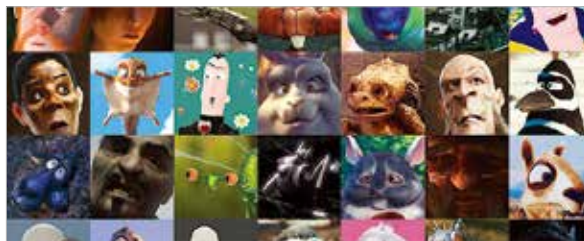
Courses & Tutorials

In-depth training on character modeling, 2D animation, sculpting, 3D printing, rigging, VFX and more.



Libraries

HDR images up to 16K and 24 EVs.
+ 1500 High quality textures.
Production quality characters.



Open-movies

All the production files, assets, artwork from 18 open movies.
Plus never-seen-before content.



Services

Production-management software for your film, game, or commercial projects.
Render farm software.

Visit <https://blenderstudio.cn>



**ANIMATION
GLOBAL**



INTRODUCING BLENDER 4.0

A LEAP FORWARD IN 3D ANIMATION AND VFX

BY: RAYMOND D. NEOH

The last time we wrote about Blender was 2 years after Blender 3.0. It took almost 20 years for Blender 2.0 to go Blender 3.0. Now after 2 years, we are seeing Blender 4.0. This latest iteration of Blender brings a plethora of new features, improvements, and enhancements that further solidify its position as one of the leading tools in the industry. In this article, we will explore some of the key highlights of Blender 4.0 and why it is generating so much excitement among 3D artists and enthusiasts.



1. Eevee Real-Time Rendering Engine

Blender 4.0 introduces significant advancements to its real-time rendering engine, Eevee. Eevee now supports

ray tracing, allowing for more realistic lighting and shadows in real time. This feature provides artists with a powerful tool to visualize their scenes accurately without the need for time-consuming render cycles. The integration of ray tracing enhances the overall realism and immersiveness of the rendered images, making it an invaluable addition to the software.



2. Geometry Nodes

One of the most groundbreaking additions in Blender 4.0 is the Geometry Nodes system. This feature revolutionizes the way artists create and manipulate complex geometry in Blender. It allows users to create procedural geometry using a node-based workflow, enabling endless possibilities for creating intricate models, terrains, and effects. With Geometry Nodes, artists can easily

generate and modify complex structures, such as trees, rocks, and cityscapes, using a simple and intuitive interface.



3. Sculpting and Painting Improvements

Blender 4.0 brings several enhancements to its sculpting and painting tools, providing artists with more flexibility and control over their artistic creations. The new features include better performance for high-resolution sculpting, improved brush dynamics, enhanced brushes for sculpting and painting, and the ability to seamlessly switch between sculpting and painting modes. These improvements make the sculpting and painting workflow smoother and more efficient, allowing artists to focus on their artistic expression.



4. AI Denoising

Blender 4.0 incorporates AI-powered denoising technology, which significantly reduces the noise in rendered images, improving the overall quality of the final output. This feature utilizes machine learning algorithms to analyze and remove noise while preserving important details. With AI denoising, artists can achieve cleaner and more visually appealing renders in less time, as it eliminates the need for excessive render samples or post-processing techniques to reduce noise.

5. Faster and More Efficient

Blender 4.0 comes with various performance optimizations that make the software faster and more efficient. Improved multithreading capabilities allow users to take full advantage of modern CPU architectures, resulting in quicker viewport rendering and overall responsiveness. Additionally, optimizations in the underlying codebase enhance the stability and reliability of the software, ensuring a smoother experience for artists working on complex projects.



6. New Asset Manager

Blender 4.0 introduces a new asset manager that streamlines the process of organizing, managing, and reusing assets within Blender projects. This feature enables artists to easily browse, import, and manage 3D assets, materials, textures, and other resources directly from within Blender. The asset manager helps improve workflow efficiency and collaboration

by providing a centralized hub for accessing and sharing project assets.



7. Improved Grease Pencil

Blender's Grease Pencil tool, which allows artists to draw directly in the 3D viewport, has received significant improvements in Blender 4.0. The new version introduces a more robust and versatile Grease Pencil system, enabling artists to create 2D animations and artwork with greater precision and control. The improved Grease Pencil toolset includes features such as layer management, keyframe interpolation, and advanced stroke modifiers, making it an excellent choice for both traditional 2D animation and concept art within Blender.



8. Enhanced Video Editing

Blender 4.0 brings notable enhancements to its video editing



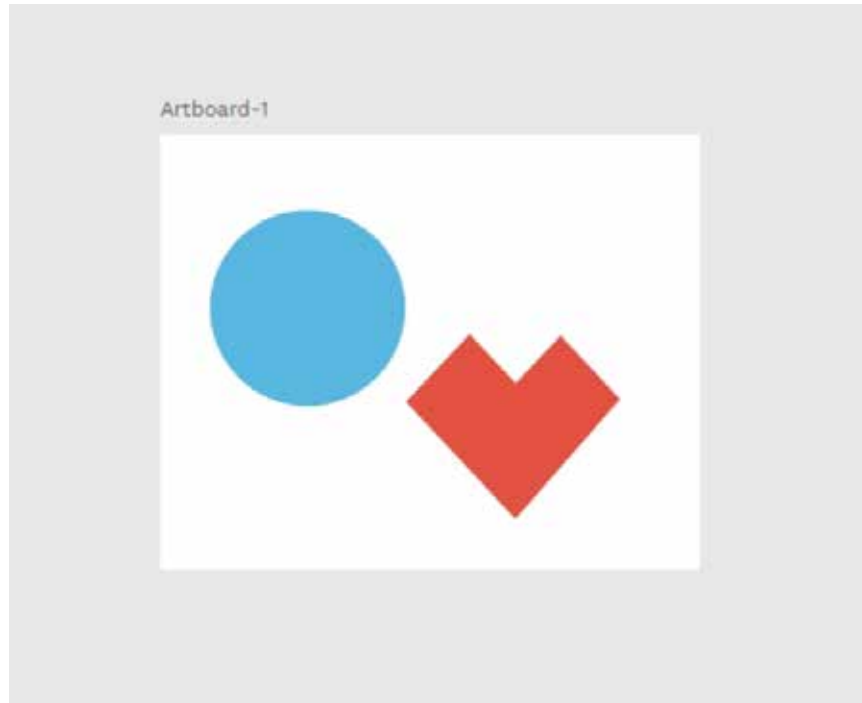
capabilities. The video editor now supports a wide range of video formats, making it easier to import and work with various footage. Additionally, new features such as improved playback performance, advanced color grading tools, and audio waveform visualization enhance the editing experience and allow for more precise control over video projects. These improvements make Blender a capable all-in-one solution for both 3D animation and video editing needs.



9. VFX and Simulation Improvements

Blender has always been popular among VFX artists, and version 4.0 further strengthens its position in the field. The software introduces several improvements to its VFX and simulation capabilities, including enhancements to the particle system, smoke and fire simulations, and cloth simulations. These updates provide artists with more control and realism when creating dynamic effects and simulations, opening up new possibilities for creating stunning visual effects.

GET TO KNOW PENPOT FOR YOUR UX/UI DESIGN NEEDS!



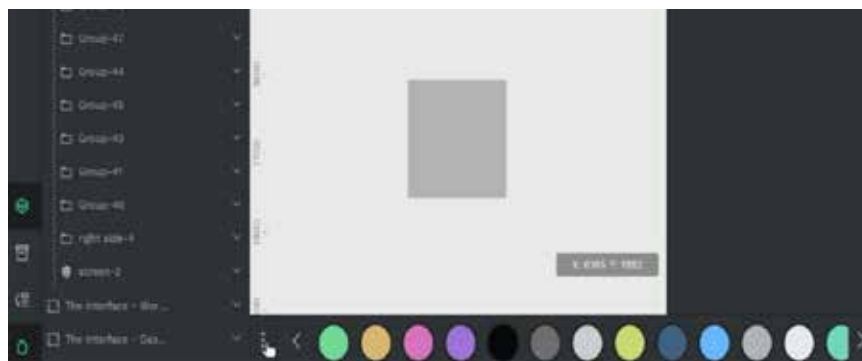
BY: ANN LEE

If you're working in the field of UX/UI and aren't familiar with Penpot, this article is for you. Penpot's greatest strength lies in providing a platform for collaborative design among cross-domain teams. Although it is an open-source design software, it has numerous functions that rival its paid competitors like Adobe XD. The functions we'll be looking at today are just the tip of the iceberg, but enough to help you get a feel of Penpot.

Artboards

An artboard appears as a white canvas with fixed edges. You can choose a specific screen or print size based on your design needs.

- Create artboards: Click on the first square icon directly below the 'move' pointer in the toolbar. Click and drag the pointer to create a custom-sized artboard. You can also choose presets with the most common resolution for devices and standard print sizes at the Design Properties Sidebar.



borders become green, you'll have successfully selected it. Once selected, hold the 'Shift' key then click and drag the artboard to move it around.

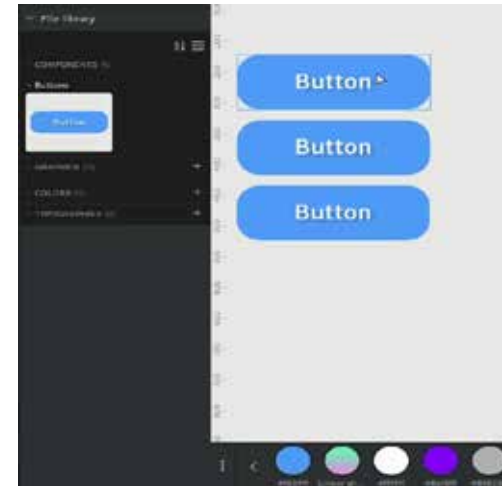
- Set artboard as thumbnail: Select an artboard and right-click. On the menu, choose 'Set as thumbnail'. The selected artboard will be shown as the file thumbnail on the file card at the dashboard.

Color Palette

The color palette lets you choose colors in the viewport without having to look for the color picker. You can switch between saved color libraries with the menu.

- Show/hide the color palette: There are 3 ways to do this: From the main menu at the top left of the navigation bar, click the color palette button (circled) on the toolbar, or use the color palette launcher at the color picker.
- Color palette menu: The menu can be opened by clicking the 3 vertical dots on the left of the color palette. From there, you can switch between color libraries, as well as switch between big and small thumbnail sizes.
- Applying color: To fill, select the shape and choose the desired color from the color palette. To apply color to the stroke, press 'Alt' while clicking.

- Select and move artboards: Click on the artboard name or over an area without layers. When the



Components

A component is an object or group of objects that are reusable across user files. Components are separated into Main components and Component copies. As all copies of a component used in user files are linked, any changes done to the main component will be reflected in all component copies.

It is also possible to create overrides for specific parts of component copies which allow the copies to keep these unique changes whilst staying in sync with the main component.

- Create a component: Click and drag your cursor and select an/a group of object(s). Right-click on your selection and choose 'Create component' from the object menu.
- Create a folder for components: First, create a component. Then rename the component like this: 'FOLDER NAME/COMPONENT NAME', such as 'Buttons/Button-1'.
- Update main components: If you'd like to apply a change you've made in a component copy to the main component, right-click on the component copy and choose 'Update main component'.
- Component overrides: These are marked with a '*' at the layers list. You can reset overrides and allow the component copy to be affected by the main component by right-clicking the copy and selecting 'Reset overrides'.

Grids

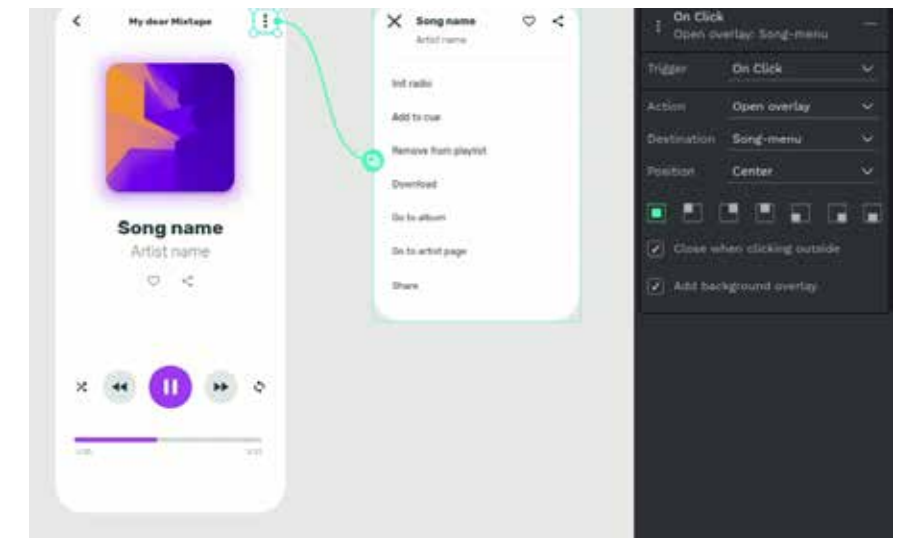
Grids help you align content geometrically. Penpot has three types of grids: squares, columns, and rows.

- Add grids: You can create grids on an artboard. First, select the artboard. On the right sidebar, choose 'Grids & Layouts' and click on '+' to add a grid. You can add as many grids as you want.
- Hide and remove grids: Under 'Grids & Layouts', you can find your existing grids. Hover on a grid and you'll see an eye icon and a '-' icon beside it. To hide, click on the eye. To remove, click on '-'.

Prototyping

You can build interactive prototypes by connecting artboards. These prototypes can help you visualize how users navigate through the screens in your product.

- Connecting artboards: First, open a file with at least two artboards. Then, activate Prototype mode and select an object (shape/artboard/group) to act as the trigger of an interaction. From the selected object, drag a connection to the destination artboard. This automatically creates a flow starting point. You can test how your prototype runs by clicking the play button on the Prototype tab.
- Fix elements when scrolling: Select an element and go to the Design sidebar on the right. Under the Constraints



section, choose 'Fix when scrolling'. Elements will be fixed in place as you scroll in View mode.

Comments

You can use comments to communicate with and leave feedback for team members.

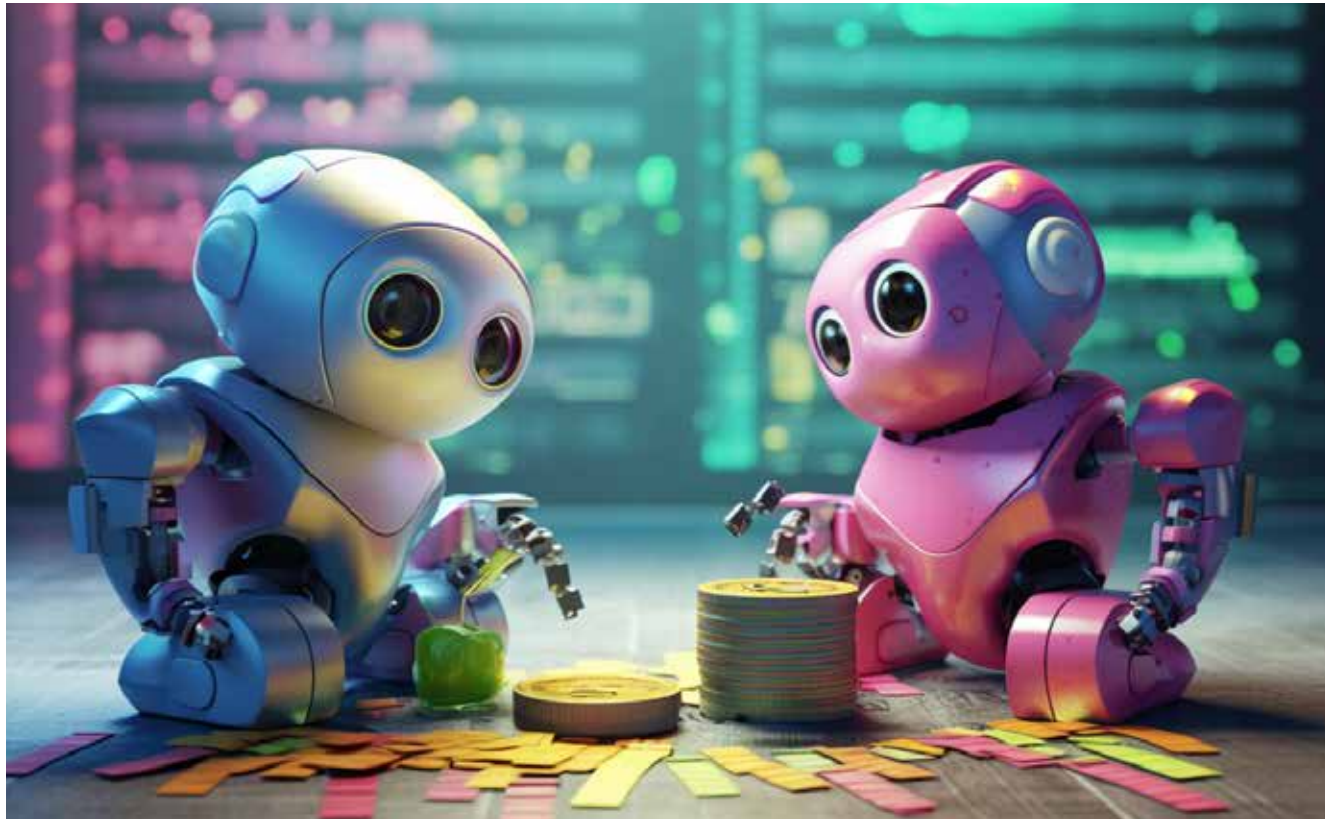
- Add comments: Click on the comment icon (circled) in the toolbar of the workspace. Then choose where you'd like to leave your comment. After you've written your comment, choose 'Post' to leave a comment.
- Reply to comments: Click on a comment (numbered circles), then write your comment in the text box at the bottom of the comment popup.
- Mark comment threads as read: Click on the checkbox on the upper right of a comment popup and it will disappear from your comments notifications.

Explore the rest of Penpot!

The above functions are just a select few out of the sea of functions Penpot has, but you're now more familiar with Penpot than when you started! If you like Penpot so far, you can also check out the Penpot community to see what other UX/UI designers have to say about Penpot!

GODOT

THE GAME ENGINE WITH FULL POTENTIAL

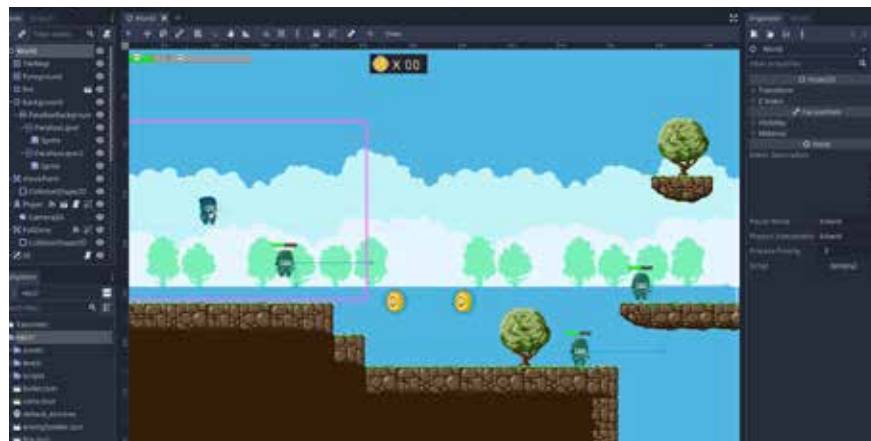


BY: CHRIS KWOK

Thanks to the emergence of large and small game engines such as Unity, Unreal, GameMaker, and Godot in the market, in recent years, the threshold of developing games and interactive experiences has become more and more friendly for novices. The game engine contains common game development components, various input methods and controls, settings for lighting, camera, sound, physics logic, platform output, and others that are built in, which make game production easier and save production time for developers. Here, we introduce you to a multi-functional and cross-platform game engine--Godot.

Godot is open-source, free software. The games made with it can run on Windows, Mac, Linux, Android, IOS, HTML5, and other platforms. Users

can download and use Godot at will without being restricted by subscription fees or their income (some software has pricing policies concerning users'



annual income, and they need to pay to use when their income is higher than a certain number). In addition, Godot does not force users to use its startup screens in their games.

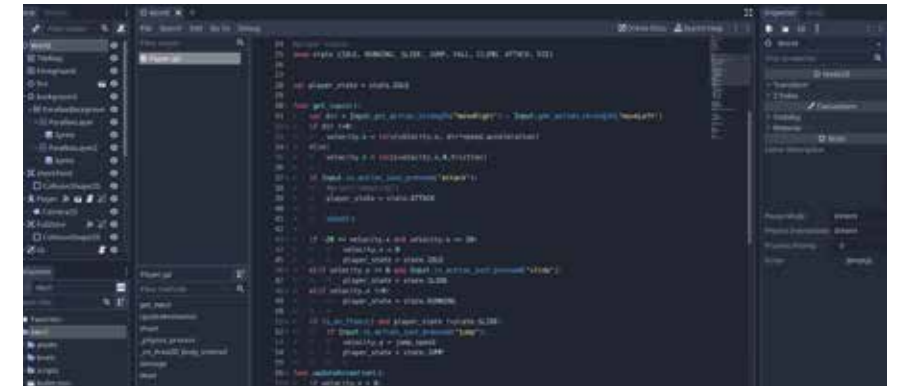
Godot's design philosophy

Godot has a simple and intuitive development environment, where the base objects are called "NODE" and the node-integrated trees are called "Scene SCENE". Godot embraces object-oriented design at its core with its flexible scene system and Node hierarchy. Godot's programming language uses GDScript whose structure is similar to that of Python and is also compatible with C#, allowing programmers with any background to get up and running quickly and hand over their work easily.

Godot has separate 2D and 3D engines built in to accommodate games with different characteristics. When using Godot for game development, users can also easily switch between the rendering engines - between GLES2 for web use and GLES3 for computer-based distribution platforms.

Small but complete

Godot is an all-in-one package-like software, but the size of the



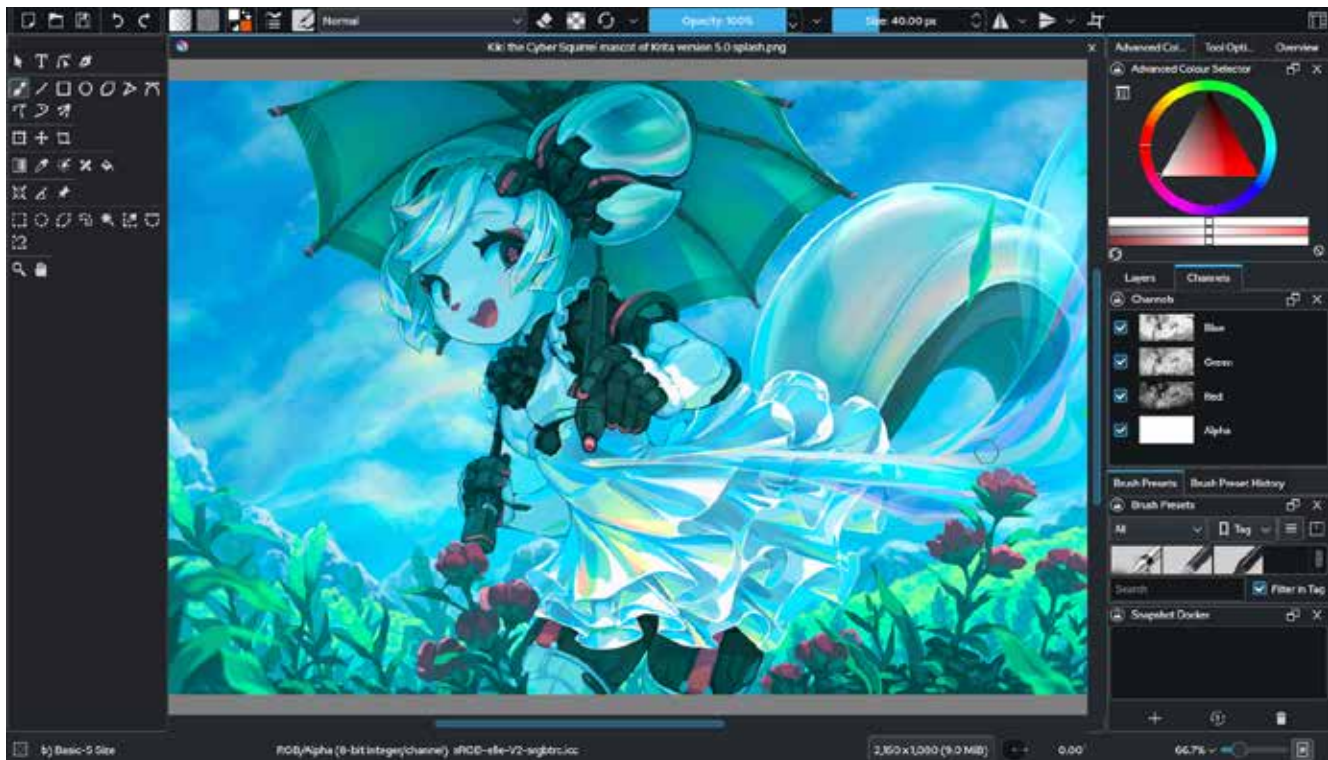
whole engine is only about 200MB. Amazingly, such a small tool has built-in facilities for file management, 2D/3D scene setup, code editor, material editing, versioning, status editor, and animation timeline setting. What's more, by downloading a few more components, Godot can fully satisfy the needs of users to publish their works on various platforms.

The Powerful updates of Godot 4.0 Godot 4.0 is now in the Beta 4 stage, and its launch is just around the corner. In the beta, GDScript has been upgraded with new functions, and the rendering engine will be upgraded to Vulkan, with increased lighting and real-time rendering effects, and a

quantum leap in the ability to render 3D scenes. In addition, the physics engine will be upgraded, and the editor UI will be updated to make it easier to use. What's more, Godot has no destructive upgrade mechanism, so users can upgrade with confidence.

You can download or use Godot on Steam, as an easy-to-learn game engine, Godot's intuitive development interface, open-source features, and increasingly powerful performance make it gain more and more attention.





KRITA

THE TRENDSETTING FREE DIGITAL DRAWING SOFTWARE

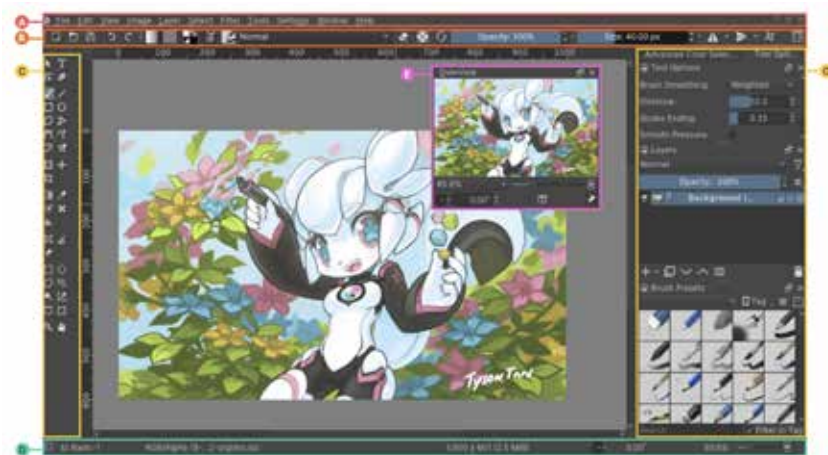
BY: LUCA AU YEUNG

The first impression of painting for most people is traditional hand drawing, including pencil sketching, oil painting, plastic painting, pastel painting, and so on. However, with the increasing popularity of digital drawing software and equipment, the types of painting have been greatly expanded. In the commercial field of art creation nowadays, digital painting has taken up the mainstream. In every sense, digital drawing is more suitable for beginners who are interested in drawing than hand drawing.

However, there is a wide variety of computer graphics software, and beginners may face difficulties in

choosing a suitable one for themselves as a start. Adobe Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint, PaintTool Sai, etc. are famous drawing software in the

industry, but they have the threshold of paying a subscription fee to use. Is there drawing software that is completely free and not inferior to the



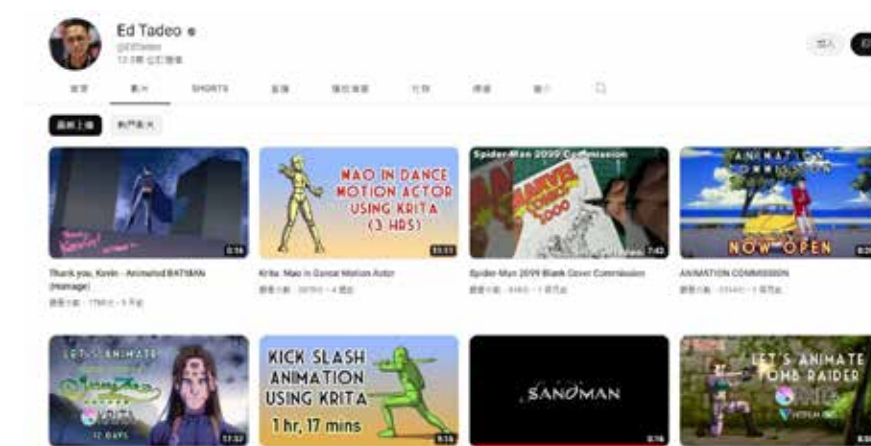
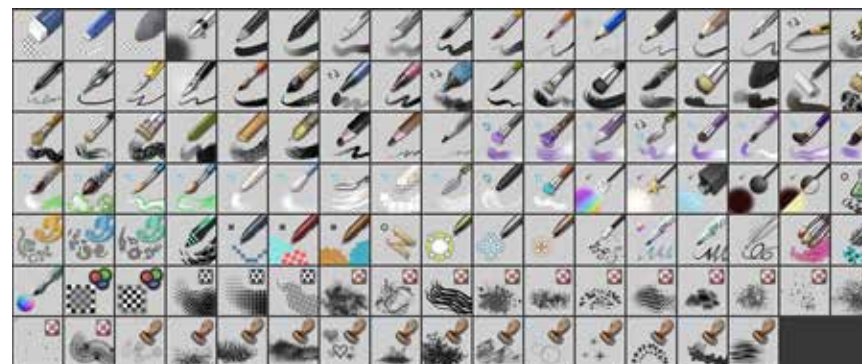
paid software in function? The answer is yes – it is Krita.

Krita is a free and open-source drawing software that supports not only Windows and MacOS but also platforms like Linux and Android, etc. Krita is a drawing software designed for digital drawing and animation, and its user interface is clear, simple, and easy to use. In terms of user experience (UX) design, Krita's development team has thoughtfully listed the most functional features on the function bar, while also taking into account the role of the digital pen in the design, users can draw through the two side buttons of the digital pen, the Ctrl and Shift keys of the keyboard and the multi-functional drawing tool pad that pops up with the right button. This can reduce redundant operations and improve the smoothness of creation, making it easier for beginners to learn.

Krita has all the necessary features of drawing software, not only for creating unlimited layers but also for creating vector layers, which allows users to create vector drawings without compromising quality. Krita also carries different forms of symmetric drawing tools that allow creators to draw complex patterns and objects.

Since Krita is a free open-source software, users are not limited to using the default brushes in it but also make full use of the resources created by other creators, such as brushes, graphics, plug-ins, and so on. In addition to importing other people's works, users can also create their materials for other creators to use.

The core of a drawing software's success is the brushes, in addition to



its functions. The most outstanding feature of Krita is that it has a bunch of preset brushes - more than 100 brushes are designed by professional designers, suitable for different styles of drawing. The design idea of this set of brushes is to:

- Provide a set of brushes that are good enough for both beginners and experts
- Prepare tools for classic Krita uses, including comic outlining and coloring, digital painting, framing, pixel painting, 3D texturing, etc.
- Demonstrate the functions of various brush engines to provide a reference template for customizing your brushes

Krita is already very good as graphics software, but what makes it even better is that it has an additional 2D animation function than other graphics software that requires payment. Creators can use Krita to produce animated short films. In addition, there are also independent 2D game developers who use Krita to produce game animation material.

Draw the materials needed for the animated films in Krita, categorize the layers of the materials, and then import them into Blender for animation creation and fine tuning, mixing two different software for animation creation.

Krita seems to be just an ordinary drawing software, but it is capable of handling different types of creative work, such as illustration, comics, animation, games and so on. After years of continuous updates, Krita has now become a professional drawing tool. We believe that Krita will continue to be updated with even more powerful and rich features.





GIMP & INKSCAPE POWERFUL DIGITAL IMAGE PROCESSING SOFTWARE

BY: CHRIS KWOK

In the era of digital economy, the skill of processing digital images is indispensable. To make or create images, of course, you need software to help, instead of paying a lot of subscription fees, you can just use those free and open-source software that are competitive enough. Among them, GIMP and Inkscape is a pair of good choices. Some people may ask, why would I choose two software at once, because GIMP is mainly used to make point matrix diagrams, and Inkscape is mainly used to make vector diagrams.

Raster and Vector Graphics

A raster image is pixel-based. Pixels of different colors are arranged together to form an image. Digital photographs are the most well-known examples of raster graphics. Vector graphics use mathematical formulas to store information on the image, including the shape, color, and location of objects. The major difference between the two is that when the image is continuously enlarged, the former shows a little bit of pixel jaggedness, while the latter remains smooth.



GIMP

GIMP is a powerful image processing software and is also a free open-source image solution for graphic designers, photographers, and some image processing people. In terms of image luminosity contrast control, color curve adjustment, and saturation adjustment, GIMP is definitely not inferior to the paid software. In addition to retouching and compositing images, users can also use different brushes in the GIMP for digital painting. Besides, GIMP also has a large number of third-party plug-ins, which cover a wide range of needs in the creation of digital images.

Inkscape

Inkscape is a free and open-source processing software for vector images, suitable for creating graphic design and layout design, such as logos, leaflets, envelopes, and web or social media image design. Users can also use Inkscape to create User Interfaces, infographics, and charts.

The Two Who Supplement Each Other

When creating digital images, the raster graphics processing software and the vector graphics processing software are often used together. After retouching the image with GIMP, users can import the file to Inkscape for post-production, such as adding texts and some information, and then export it to the target platform.



數位轉型

Digital Transformation

THE NEW GLOBAL ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

BY: YOI CHAN

In the COVID-19 pandemic era, both large corporations and SMEs have been forced to change their business models. The work-from-home model has unwittingly accelerated the digital transformation of companies, and the digital business model is no longer limited to innovative companies but is gradually becoming a global mainstream.

Although digital transformation is highly discussed in the media and online, it is still relatively new for many business managers. What exactly does digital transformation involve? And what are the practical benefits it can bring to businesses? This article will give you answers from several aspects.

What is digital transformation?
Digital transformation is using digital

systems and software to integrate data from all areas in the business operation and make key recommendations on business strategy and direction based on different customer needs and usage scenarios through data-defined standards. Simply put, digital transformation is to use data to drive business transformation so that

companies can make the best decisions rapidly in response to rapid market changes.

How Can Digital Transformation Benefit the Company?

Overall, digital transformation can bring the following three major benefits to companies



1. Simplify the Workflow
A well-designed digital transformation solution allows companies to streamline their paper-based workflow in a short period, thereby increasing work efficiency.

2. Reduce Operating Costs
Most enterprises implement digital transformation to reduce costs. Digital transformation can help businesses streamline various costs, including manpower so that they can spend more resources on business development.

3. Create New Business Models
When companies spend the savings on innovation and R&D, they have the opportunity to change their business direction and scope, and possibly transform into a very different company.

A new one-stop solution to help your company complete its digital transformation with ease

The OTP platform provides you with a one-stop digital office solution. The rich resources on the platform include digital tools, digital industry news, and tool-teaching videos. Users can also enjoy digital forums and tool certification services on the platform. The accompanying toolkit, Krystal Office+, can act as your guide through the 3 stages of digital transformation.

Stage 1: Digitization
Many traditional businesses use paper to do documentation, a time-consuming and unsystematized process. Krystal Office+, which includes all office software, can digitize data recorded by paper, which can effectively improve daily work efficiency and reduce operating costs.

Stage 2: Digital Optimization
With Krystal Office+'s digital tools, companies can collect and analyze data, integrate existing businesses, enhance internal efficiency, and improve service and product quality.

Krystal ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and BI (Business Intelligence) programs cover key elements of business management, including the management of production, human resources, orders, e-commerce, and projects, helping them to develop their business and



operation strategies more effectively.

Stage 3: Digital Transformation
Digital transformation has a holistic impact on businesses. Before implementing a digital transformation, it is important to compile a more effective strategy based on the information gathered in the previous two stages before developing a new business model.

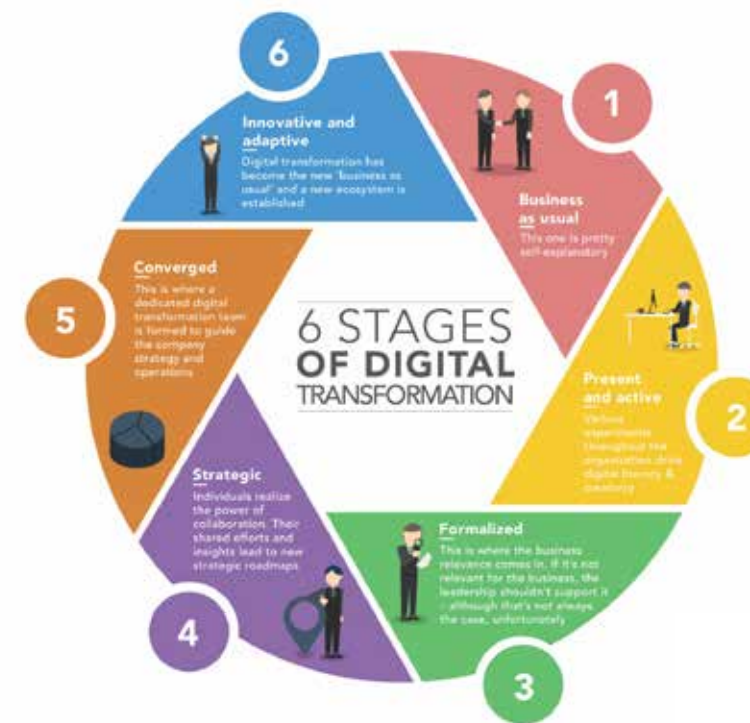
After understanding the definition and benefits of digital transformation, it's

hard not to realize that it's already a worldwide trend, and Krystal Office+ can take care of all your day-to-day business needs so that digital transformation is no longer just empty talk.



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ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING BENEFITING BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE DIGITAL AGE



**BY: ERIKA NG,
MARCUS FOK**

Have you heard of ERP? Or perhaps you've come across the term Enterprise Resource Planning? Many might be intimidated by the seemingly sophisticated terminology of Enterprise Resource Planning, thinking it's something reserved for large corporations or multinational entities, seemingly disconnected from everyday

life. However, in this technologically advanced digital age, ERP can be beneficial to not only large companies but also small businesses and even individuals.

So, what exactly is Enterprise Resource Planning, and why do we need it? As the name suggests, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is designed to plan and manage enterprise resources. With a clear understanding of how resources are utilized within a company, ERP can help organizations more efficiently use

their resources, ultimately leading to cost savings and increased productivity.

With the assistance of Enterprise Resource Planning, not only do decision-makers gain better insights into resource allocation, but departments can also enhance collaboration, and reduce communication gaps and information ambiguity. Coordination between production and inventory departments, as well as communication between the human resources management



department and accounting, becomes simpler and more transparent. For individuals, learning how to use an Enterprise Resource Planning system leads to a better overall understanding of company management, enhancing one's professional competence and workplace competitiveness.

Krystal ERP: Leveling the playing field, a helping hand to SMEs

Krystal ERP is one of the initiatives under the Krystal OTP umbrella, dedicated to assisting businesses of all sizes to access the services they rightfully deserve at affordable prices. Technology should not be an exclusive tool; on the contrary, it should be a tool accessible to the masses. Krystal Technology is committed to leveling the technology playing field, and Krystal ERP is specifically the product geared towards businesses. We aim to provide Enterprise Resource Planning systems to small and medium-sized enterprises at reasonable prices, enabling them to reduce unnecessary costs during challenging times and to navigate the global economic recovery trend proactively.

From accounting processes to managing vital elements such as production, human resources, inventory, CRM, orders, e-commerce, and projects, Krystal ERP covers the essential components needed for running business operations effectively.

Krystal ERP's subscription plans

encompass various ERP data analysis tools, aiding users in conducting business more efficiently and devising appropriate business strategies. All data can be stored locally or uploaded to the cloud, making it extremely convenient.

Through ERP, small and medium-sized enterprises can not only manage resources more effectively but also redirect cost savings towards valuable endeavors like talent acquisition. Additionally, Krystal ERP offers technical and systematic instructional support, ensuring that businesses need not worry about using this tool even if

they lack a technological background.

Furthermore, Krystal OTP provides a Business Intelligence (BI) program, helping businesses gain a comprehensive understanding of their company's situation and analyze their path to success in this dynamic and ever-changing market.



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EMERGING TRENDS IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY INDUSTRY

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS



BY: EUGENE PONG, MARCUS FOK

As companies expand their operations to a considerable scale, they inevitably encounter various management challenges. One of these challenges is the inability of third-party data analysis platforms to meet the company's specific needs. This is precisely the moment when constructing a robust Business Intelligence (BI) system becomes

imperative, as it empowers enterprises to make forward-looking business analyses and decisions.

During the process of digital transformation, businesses accumulate a wealth of data, which can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, the larger the volume of data, the greater the potential for extracting business value. On the other hand, without substantial data analysis capabilities, this avalanche of data can become a hindrance to effective decision-making. It is in such circumstances

that Business Intelligence Systems (also known as Business Intelligence or BI) come into play, playing a pivotal role in the trends of the digital market.

What is a Business Intelligence System?

A Business Intelligence System is a comprehensive solution that leverages an enterprise's existing data infrastructure to perform data modeling, analysis, visualization, and reporting. Many modern BI systems on the market support real-time data analysis, and three-dimensional charts,



with rapid and clear information presentation. Furthermore, the layout and user interface of many BI systems are designed to be user-friendly, enabling employees to quickly create data reports with minimal training.

Why is a Business Intelligence System needed?

A Business Intelligence System is a technology-driven solution for analyzing and predicting business operations within an enterprise. It aids users in gaining a more profound understanding of their company's current operations and insights into its future prospects. In the past, BI system users were predominantly limited to senior management. However, as information technology becomes increasingly ubiquitous in the market, employees at various levels now encounter Business Intelligence Systems

in their work, helping them fulfill their responsibilities more effectively.

Krystal Business Intelligence System (Krystal BI)

The Krystal Business Intelligence System boasts a straightforward user interface, making it user-friendly and convenient to operate. Its built-in powerful data visualization capabilities enable Krystal BI to display various charts and integrate with various backend software and databases, effectively showcasing a company's operational status to users. In response to the growing demand for artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in today's society, Krystal BI has developed cutting-edge features, aiming to provide businesses with the latest technology to bridge the global digital divide and foster growth in the digital economy.

How Does Business Intelligence Impact the Film and Animation Industry?

In today's digitized economy, harnessing data and conducting relevant analyses can lead to new developments in the film and animation industry.

However, the current industry landscape reveals that most online streaming platforms do not share databases with filmmakers, and most professionals in the film industry lack training in data-related matters. As a result, the efficacy of Business Intelligence Systems remains far from optimized. Presently, most film companies only use big data to predict viewership and audience demographics. In reality, from the moment a script reaches the distributor, it is possible to employ real-time big data analysis to monitor metrics such as click-through rates and views on various streaming platforms, allowing for script and storyline adjustments that can enhance the quality of the film.

It is foreseeable that any industry in the future will benefit from Business Intelligence Systems, as these systems, with their robust data analysis capabilities, will help businesses thrive in the digital economy.



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A CONVERSATION WITH TON ROOSENDAAL

BLENDER STUDIO AND THE FUTURE OF THE BLENDER 4.0 AND BEYOND

BY RAYMOND D. NEOH

“Each CG artist should have his/her own tools, like a chef always carries his/her own tools to cook” - Ton Roosendaal, Founder and Chairman, Blender Foundation

The last time I was at Blender Studio was 4 years ago before the COVID-19 pandemic. Time flew by, and as I stepped into the Blender Studio and was greeted warmly by Ton Roosendaal (Founder and Chairman, Blender Foundation) and Francesco Siddi (General Manager, Blender Studio) it was an emotional moment. I brought over a Terracotta Warriors replica that I got from Xi'an for Ton. The following is my conversation with Ton and Francesco.

Wide Industrial support for Blender Development

According to Ton Blender development is supported by all major hardware and tools developers. They are :

- AMD - Major GPU hardware company that has sponsored Blender development and employs several core Blender developers. AMD GPUs are optimized for Cycles rendering.
- NVIDIA - GPU company that has provided funding and engineers to improve Blender Cycles GPU rendering support.
- Intel - CPU manufacturer that has funded optimization of Blender for Intel hardware, like AVX and Xeon processors.
- Facebook/Meta - Provided funding for Eevee real-time renderer and supports development.
- Unity - Game engine company that collaborates with Blender on



- features for game artists and pipeline integration.
- Ubisoft, Epic Games, Microsoft - Major digital entertainment companies that employ Blender artists and contribute bug fixes or funding.
- Google - Sponsored development of Blender builds for Android and ChromeOS, plus Summer of Code projects.
- Amazon Web Services - Hosts Blender Cloud infrastructure and supports Blender with AWS grants.
- The Khronos Group - Provides

- funding to improve Blender support for industry-standard APIs like OpenCL, OpenGL, and Vulkan.
- NZ Film Commission - Provided grants to the Blender Institute for films made with Blender.
- Mozilla - Sponsored projects like WebGL support and a browser-based Blender prototyping tool.

In addition, our CG Global Entertainment has also contributed to the Blender Development Fund and will sponsor the Blender Conference in 2023.

Blender Studio China — Blender training and services in Chinese

During my visit to the Blender Studio, we renewed our Agreement with Blender Studio to release the Blender Studio learning and services platform (previously Blender Cloud) in Chinese in Greater China. We have been working on the project for the past 4 years, diligently keeping up with the developments of the evolving Blender movement. It is a monumental project to translate all the Blender Studio materials into Simplified and Traditional Chinese, and then add voice-overs to the fully translated videos. In the meantime, we have also developed a multilingual video player so users can select the different soundtracks and subtitles they want. This will help Blender Studio to offer its excellent content to users proficient in different languages, to learn about the software in a much easier manner,

making Blender accessible to an even wider audience.

Blender 4.0 and beyond

We have been involved with Blender since the Version 2.7 release, and we have come a long way to have now reached the launch of Blender 4.0. As Ton said during our conversation, Blender has never stopped developing to improve the tool's functionalities. With wide industrial support, Blender Institute wants to make Blender the industrial standard for producing all kinds of CG-related works, from animation, games, architecture walk-throughs, product design and the Metaverse. Blender Institute will continue to develop Blender beyond 4.0 to 5.0 and 6.0 in the future.

Blender education for the next generation of artists

The Blender team fully supports our

efforts in educating future CG artists. Working closely with the Blender Education Special Interest Group, we are forming the International Alliance of Blender Educators (IABE) to make Blender education and curriculum available to primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary educators and even industry professionals globally. To help push the project forward, we have started a CG animation competition in China for kids 8 to 17 years old. Supported by national and local TV stations and schools, we make the curriculum freely available on the internet, and at the same time organize on-location classes for students who want to learn Blender in a face-to-face instruction environment. This will motivate young learners to pick up Blender and gain international recognition while learning invaluable skills that will help them excel in the Digital Economy.





HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR DR. JOHNNY NG TALKS ABOUT HONG KONG'S POSITIONING AND ADVANTAGES IN THE DIGITAL TIDE

BY: ANN LEE

Dr. Johnny Ng is a member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. He is a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and an entrepreneur. He holds a PhD in Industrial and Systems Engineering from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and a post-doctoral degree in Computer Science from Tsinghua University.

CGGE is honored to invite Mr. Ng

(hereinafter referred to as "Ng") to talk about the trend of technologies and the positioning and advantages of Hong Kong in the development of the digital economy.

CGGE: You have mentioned there is a shortage of IT talents in Hong Kong, what do you think is the solution? Or how should Hong Kong's education or tertiary education support the development of innovation and technology?

Ng: I think the talent shortage emerged this year for many reasons, such as the pandemic, some people

cannot be in Hong Kong at all times, so they went to other places. But the positioning of Hong Kong, as it has been written in the 14th Five-Year Plan, would be "eight centers" --- four traditional centers, and four new centers. Among them the International Center for Innovation and Technology is the one that has been talked about a lot, the Chief Executive's policy address also talks about this point using 5 pages.

I believe Hong Kong must be short of talent, because a large number of industries need them, including the Web 3.0 industry. Our preliminary

estimate is that Hong Kong lacks 100,000 to 200,000 related technical personnel, and we can not rely on tertiary institutions to fill the gap, so we need to walk on two legs. First, we need to speed up the introduction of talents, the Chief Executive said "grabbing talents", and I said "attracting talents", we already have corresponding policies to attract talents to come to Hong Kong more quickly and easily.

Secondly, we need to train our talents as well, talents I think this is also a transformation. We have the Employees Retraining Board in Hong Kong. Some people may originally be engaged in other industries, and want to switch to Web 3.0 or other IT-related work, we use the retraining board or other tertiary institutions to let they can grasp the relevant skills as soon as possible so that they can enter the industry. I think the world is changing rapidly, nowadays, people's training cannot be used for life after learning 20 or 10 years ago, this is not possible now, we must keep learning, studying for life, to update our skills to meet this technological world.

CGGE: You also mentioned the development of the Greater Bay Area before, what do you think about the development of IT in the Greater Bay Area? What should Hong Kong do to support it?

Ng: I think the positioning of Hong Kong in the Greater Bay Area is very clear, as a core city for innovation and finance, or even as a leading city. I think the biggest advantage of Hong Kong is that it is internationally oriented, because many of our young people or most of our citizens are bilingual, and we are connected to the more advanced and developed

countries in the world. Most of them are English-speaking countries, and our exchanges with them in science and technology are very direct.

On the one hand, Hong Kong should play a leading role in bringing in international talent. And the Greater Bay Area has the advantage of a large market, a large place, and low production costs, these are the key elements of the development of technology. I think that Hong Kong, together with the Greater Bay Area, can become a template for the whole of China, and after some innovation industries have landed, it can become a successful Guinea Pig. I believe this is the reason why the Greater Bay Area is very promising in IT development.

CGGE: Another new thing I want to ask you about is the metaverse, what do you make of it?

Ng: Metaverse is not a concept anymore, it used to be, as in the movies, that human reality and the virtual world could be combined. It is close to the game because the game engine can do such a thing (combine the reality and the virtual world), but the biggest difference between the game and the metaverse is that when the game is finished, you may shut it down, reset it, and start all over again, but the metaverse refers to the things that happen in the virtual space can be materialized in the real life through VR AR technology, such as the transmission of some value chains, which all depends on the successful implementation of blockchain technology. One of the technologies we all know is Bitcoin. Over the past twelve years, countless people have tried to attack it, but could not. The metaverse is a combination of gaming

tools and blockchain technology.

I believe there will be more and more applications for the metaverse in the future. At first, it is for conferences and education, and then for business and scientific research, all of which can be used. Of course, the function of the computer needs to be further enhanced because our CPU speed must be fast enough. I know that the number of people who can move in the metaverse at the same time is relatively limited.

CGGE: The development of the metaverse and virtual technology collided with the pandemic, so what do you think is the positive or negative impact of the pandemic on the development of virtual technology?

Ng: I think the impact is positive. As you know, at the beginning of the pandemic, many enterprises had to work from home, thus promoting the development of some web conferencing companies, which are not new but have been providing services to some large enterprises, that can only afford such expensive network services.

However, due to the pandemic, the technology of these companies has advanced by leaps and bounds. Metaverse is a step ahead of these companies, those are just one to many points of plane interaction, but Metaverse can provide multi-point to multi-point meetings. For example, if 100 people meet together, they can first meet in small groups, and then come together to meet again, these features are not provided by traditional virtual conferencing tools.

The pandemic has also helped the development of the metaverse space. I launched a metaverse office in May, which has already received good





comments from the neighbors. They say to me that sometimes you have meetings in Admiralty and you can't go to Kwai Chung or other places far away to meet the people, but it is fun to meet through the metaverse.

I think this pandemic is the impetus for the development of technology and, most importantly, the popularization of technology among users, so that people understand this tool and will not be afraid of it, but will embrace it.

CGGE: You have mentioned your own metaverse office, what was the idea or opportunity that made you want to promote this virtual technology?

Ng: I used to love technology when I was a kid, and I had a dream of being a scientist, hoping to make some technology that could improve human life. I have been doing artificial intelligence, human face recognition, etc. for more than 10 years.

I think I am quite sensitive to technology. Three years ago I felt that the metaverse was worth doing, so I developed it a year and a half ago (referring to the Metaverse Office for the Councillor). I hope that if people in the neighborhood can use Metaverse, it will be faster and easier to promote it.

This office also allows me to understand what difficulties the general public will have when they use these things that are just a concept in their minds so that they can let the technical staff improve this product because I hope that this thing can take root in Hong Kong and develop in the Asian region. It is quite urgent, according to my understanding, the development of the metaverse in Korea and other places is very good, the metaverse capital, metaverse Seoul is not a new thing for them, so I also hope we in Hong Kong can put more effort into it.

CGGE: What challenges will we

face if we want to popularize the metaverse in Hong Kong? Or what can the government do to make the development of the metaverse smoother?

Ng: Two aspects, one is education, I hope more colleges and universities can provide this type of course, so that more people can have the opportunity to understand it directly and master the relevant functional technology, this education is important.

The other is publicity, I think the mass media can introduce more of this to the public, letting it not just stay in a conceptual state in people's minds, but tell them what business opportunities there are, or what problems the metaverse can solve in their lives, so I think it will give a new opportunity for the development of new technologies in Hong Kong.

CONVERSING WITH FONIA WONG HONG KONG YOUTH SERVICE LEADER AND HKDAS FOUNDER OF HUMBLE ORIGINS

BY: ANN LEE

Most Hongkongers are probably familiar with Ms. Fonia Wong, one of the winners of the 2016 Hong Kong Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award. Born from a grassroots family, she is an inspiring and hardworking individual who has achieved outstanding success through her own efforts. Today, she is passionate about giving back to the community, with a special focus on the nurturing and development of local youth.

In this interview, she reveals the profound influence of youth activities on her upbringing. As the founder of the Hong Kong Youth Service Leadership Award and HKDAS, she says that the main reason for establishing youth service organizations is to help more people with similar backgrounds, especially youth from the grassroots, to realize their dreams.

"I know from my own experiences that youth activities can help people from all walks of life."

CGGE: You are a very successful business figure, having been named one of Hong Kong's Ten Outstanding Young Persons in 2016 at a young age and having started your own successful businesses. Can you tell us a little bit about your growth experience?

Wong: I was originally a new immigrant to Hong Kong with a simple family background and grew up in public housing. Later, I participated in youth activities such as the Junior Police Call and Rotary Club, which helped broaden my horizons. My first plane ride and television appearance



were all thanks to youth services.

These opportunities made me feel that youth activities can help people from all walks of life, especially youth from the grassroots. I have represented my school and district in competitions and participated in activities on behalf of Hong Kong, and this has greatly increased my self-confidence. When one's self-confidence is strong, one naturally wants to be exposed to more things and new experiences, which will have a positive impact on one's future career. I hope that my experience can help more people - I have been helping people since I was a teenager. I want to be a role model for others and help more people from similar backgrounds

as me. I hope that others can do better than I did.

Studying is important, but in this age of AI, it is even more important to train one's communication skills, problem-solving skills, and analytical skills, and to broaden one's social circle. By participating in more activities, I can meet more friends and experience more communication.

Hong Kong Youth Service Leadership Award: Encourage more young people to participate in extracurricular activities and meet different friends

CGGE: You have established the Hong Kong Youth Service Leadership



Award and done a lot for Hong Kong's youth, which shows that you are very concerned about the development of young people in Hong Kong. Can you share the reason for establishing this award?

Wong: I established the Youth Service Leadership Award because many youth organizations provide a lot of leadership training opportunities, such as camping and marching. Through this award program, I hope to encourage more young people to participate in extracurricular activities both in and out of school so that they can meet more different friends.

Behind the establishment of HKDAS: The attraction of digital assets for young people and the encouragement of entrepreneurship

CGGE: Can you tell us your motivation for founding the Hong Kong Digital Asset Society (HKDAS)? Why does Hong Kong need HKDAS nowadays?

Wong: Two or three years ago, when digital assets were trending, I had a lot of people asking me whether they should buy digital or virtual assets because my main profession is investment. For investors in the financial sector, it is important to have a deep understanding of the investment

target before investing. However, after asking a lot of friends, I found that many people do not quite understand the purpose and value of digital assets even if they have purchased them.

In addition, while doing youth service, after talking with my young friends, I found that they usually spent their non-working and waking hours studying digital asset investment. This is not about speculating cryptocurrency, but investment in real projects. They are obsessed with it, they are interested in it, and they are doing it successfully. Since young people are so interested in

digital assets and it encourages them to start their businesses, I think we can give them more correct information so that more young people can learn what digital assets are.

Also, the establishment of HKDAS will help more investors acquire a more accurate understanding of digital assets. I think it is important to understand the background and reasons behind the emergence of something, its effectiveness, and how it operates, whether you invest in it or not. So I asked my young friends and some partners in the financial sector to



set up this Digital Asset Society with me so that we can learn more about digital assets as we study them. As we help more young people, at the same time, we can help emerging industries find and nurture more talents.

CGGE: HKDAS has organized the Hackathon event for the past two years, encouraging young people to be creative and to pay attention to technology development, and to showcase the potential of local innovation to the Hong Kong community. Can you share your thoughts on organizing this event?

Wong: I think this event is very helpful in identifying creative talents. In the first competition, over 80 student teams from local institutions participated. By the second year, more than 140 teams from more than 10 countries had signed up. It is clear from the overwhelming response that young people nowadays are very interested in digital assets and that this is very popular. Also, we saw that although many of the participants had no experience in business, they were able to provide some great ideas and demonstrate the ability to implement them. Therefore, through this event, we hope to encourage more young people to think about what they can contribute to society - not just in terms of social services, but also in terms of developing new industries and improving people's quality of life. For example, digital assets involve

technologies and projects that can be used to improve lives.

CGGE: In recent years, both the Mainland and Hong Kong have been focusing on promoting innovation. What other activities does HKDAS plan to hold in the future in response to the country's policies besides the Hackathon?

Wong: Recently, the government has been more active than ever in promoting Hong Kong as a financial center or development center for digital assets, and has placed great emphasis on local technology development. As one of the items under technology development, we hope to cooperate with the government to promote digital assets. For example, we will invite the government to support the Hackathon venture competition mentioned earlier; we will hold different consultation activities when the government introduces policies related to innovation technology, for example, the government recently consulted the public on the licensing system, and investors want to set standards for how to determine who, what province, and what household can invest. We have recently collaborated with the Blockchain Society of the University of Hong Kong to ask the public for their feedback through a questionnaire, and have collected over 10,000 opinions. Although not many people seem to pay attention to digital assets in their daily lives, young people are very active in

this issue. We hope to promote more similar activities with the government and industry.

We also recently partnered with the City University of Hong Kong to help them organize the FinTech Olympiad 2023, where we invited experts from different industries, including AI (SenseTime), Fintech, and real estate (New World). Leaders from different companies and industries shared the latest developments in Fintech. We hope that young people in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area can learn from these figures gain a deeper understanding of how Fintech can change our lives, and invite more people around them to understand and learn about Fintech.





AI Technology meets Creative Minds



CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY CONVERGENCE

AI Technology meets Creative Minds

CG Global Entertainment, Krystal Institute, Krystal Technology together with our academic partners will hold the 2024 International AI-Creativity Conference in China next November.

The creative industry is experiencing significant growth and recognition on both regional and global scales. Specially countries in Asia, like China, Japan, South Korea, India, and Singapore have emerged as major creative hubs, contributing to sectors such as design, animation, gaming, film, advertising, and more.

The rising Demand for AI Integration in the Creative Industries.

With the proliferation of AI technologies, the creative industries are increasingly recognizing the potential of AI to enhance their processes and outcomes. The conference offers a platform to explore and understand the various AI tools and techniques that can be applied in the creative context. By showcasing case studies and success stories, participants gain insights into how AI can be effectively integrated into their creative practices.

Addressing Challenges and Opportunities in the global Creative Industries.

The creative industry faces distinct challenges and opportunities. These may include language diversity, market dynamics, unique aesthetic preferences, and varying levels of technological infrastructure across different countries. The conference takes into account these regional considerations and offers insights, strategies, and practical knowledge to help participants address specific challenges and leverage opportunities for AI integration in their respective global markets.

Event Organizer: Supporting Organizations:





国际人工智能创意大会
International AI Creativity Conference

AI Technology meets Creative Minds

2024 AUTUMN
SHENZHEN, CHINA



Event Organizer:



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