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SIGGRAPH

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# One Rat Short, 458nm Take Top SIGGRAPH Computer Animation Fest Honors

April 05, 2006

The SIGGRAPH 2006 Computer Animation Festival has bestowed its Best of Show Award to ONE RAT SHORT, directed by Alex Weil of New York-based Charlex, while Special Jury Honors went to 458NM, directed by Jan Bitzer, Ilja Brunck and Tom Weber of Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg in Germany.

SIGGRAPH 2006, the 33rd International Conference and Exhibition on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques, will be held July 30 through Aug. 3 in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Computer Animation Festival jury selected two award winners from 726 entries for exemplary use of computer-generated imagery and animation, and compelling storytelling.

ONE RAT SHORT is a film that follows a New York City rat from his gritty world to the interior of a futuristic laboratory. Along this journey the main character discovers love, danger and his fate.

"This piece immediately stood out to the Jury for many reasons," said Terrence Masson, SIGGRAPH 2006 Computer Animation Festival chair from Digital Fauxtography Inc. "The film's emotional tone, cinematography and technical realization all melded wonderfully into a simple yet touching short film. Repeatedly, the two lead characters transfixed our gaze with extreme close-ups, and we instantly wondered what they were thinking. Our ability to clearly empathize with the main characters' desires is one of the film's single greatest achievements."

Weil explained, "Inspired by the melancholic and innocent spirit of THE RED BALLOON, the original goal of the film was to grow the company's CG department; however, it quickly grew into so much more. The scenes take place in two worlds — one gritty and so dark that the viewer needs to peer into the screen to make out the images. In contrast, the second world is sterile, white, and so brightly lit that the viewer feels the need to turn away from the screen. One of our goals was to keep the scenes as real as possible by using camera work that provided a 'hand-held' feel to keep behind the action so the scenes did not seem staged. Further, perhaps our most important goal was to create a simple, yet riveting piece that was full of heart."

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458NM is the romantic story of two mechanical snails that find each other under the moonlight.

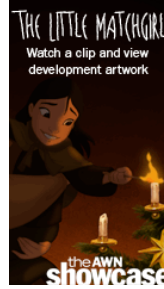
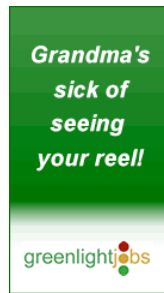
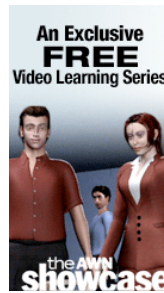
"The initial submitted artist's description in no way prepared us for the stunning impact of this film," commented Masson. "The grace, beauty and power conveyed with such humble subjects are only more appreciated upon multiple viewings. Intricate details and subtle animation build layer upon layer of simple elegance."

Explained Bitzer, Brunck and Weber, "It was pivotal to recognize that the difficulty of the project lay in identifying a piece that would creatively and technically satisfy and challenge three people. Because we jointly identified this aspect early, we remained focused and motivated throughout the process. From the beginning, we were fascinated by the beauty and impression of snails moving and kissing each other. After much discussion, we decided to adopt this as our focus for the next four months. From this concept, we were able to develop the components that we wanted — strong images, a dark mood and music as a central role in the film. Our desire was to have the music not just support the images, but dance with the images. We wanted the music to play the same role as the images. Neither could be without the other. These components had a very strong influence on our working process."

For more information on the SIGGRAPH 2006 Computer Animation Festival, visit [www.siggraph.org/s2006/main.php?f=conference&p=cat](http://www.siggraph.org/s2006/main.php?f=conference&p=cat).

SIGGRAPH 2006 will bring an estimated 25,000 computer graphics and interactive technology professionals from six continents to Boston for the industry's most respected technical and creative programs focusing on research, science, art, animation, gaming, interactivity, education and the web. More than 250 international exhibiting companies are expected. Registration for the conference and exhibition is open to the public.

ACM SIGGRAPH, the leading professional society for computer graphics and interactive techniques, sponsors SIGGRAPH 2006.



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