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Mr. Speice

Independent Study Mentorship

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Interview Assessment 2

Name of Professional: Gerald Rice

Profession/Title: Director of Animation

Studio Name: CRM Studios

Date of Interview: October 18, 2017

My second interview was conducted with Gerald Rice, the director of animation at CRM studios. From our discussion I wanted to gain a better understanding of a general scope of animation and the skills necessary to enter the field. This interview gave me the perspective of a generalist who has many skills in many areas of the animation pipeline. During this meeting we discussed the evolution of various softwares and the general requirements of the animation industry. This was a very interesting and informative interview as I was able to gain a better understanding of the various areas of the animation industry.

From this interview I learned the importance of being patient while working on animation. Mr. Rice said that to make a good animation he usually has a minimum of fifteen iterations of his work. He said that when animating scenes iterations are important to incorporate various objects into one animation. Additionally, he mentioned that when working on animation

it is important to show other people during the process to get critiques and edit the animation so that it has improvement. In order to incorporate these changes he said that animator should be able to listen to what other people have to say and communicate well. He said that if an animator can't communicate and take constructive criticism it makes them difficult to work with and also makes them less likely to be hired. Secondly, he said that practice is very important to improve ability and workflow so that animating becomes more natural rather than rigid and technical. To learn new skills he suggested using online tutorials and to try and learn many skills rather than specializing in one area early on. Lastly Mr. Rice said that I should be open to many areas that need modelers and animators such as the medical field, architecture firms, and aerospace engineering. He said that being open to many areas would give me more opportunities in the future and would help me get a job in the future. This general information will be very helpful in the future when I am working on my original work and any other products I create.

In addition to gaining an understanding of the general skills needed to be an animator I also learned about the other skills need to enter the animation. For example, it can be very helpful to learn about hardware and software to make working with the technology easier. From this interview I was able to understand more about the various types of software available and the various differences and specialties of them in addition to the best way to learn about new software. Additionally, Mr. Rice said that keeping up to date with the latest softwares is one of the most challenging parts of his job and that he has worked in many softwares during his time in the industry. While learning new skills Mr. Rice said I should try many different softwares so that I can decide which one is best for me while also having a basic understanding of many

softwares. This information will be very important in the future when I am working on my original work since I may have to work in new softwares that I do not have experience in.

One of the most interesting parts of the interview was seeing the demo reel of CRM studios and what was included to show their skills in many fields. It included an animation of a cataract procedure for the medical sector while also showing advertising for other clients. This demo reel was meant to show their work to many prospective clients while also showing their variety of skills. In addition to this Mr. Rice showed me a “holographic” box that used a CD case to make a model or animation projected from a phone look like it was floating as if it was a hologram. He said it used a mathematical law called Brewster's Law to make the projection look like it was floating in the box. I thought that this was very interesting since he was able to make an animation of a spaceship look like it was floating. From this portion of the interview I learned the importance of trying new things to make interesting products rather than just working on a computer all the time.

Overall this interview was very informative as I was able to learn about the animation industry in general and was also able to get some information that was specific to animation softwares and techniques. In addition I was able to learn about how to improve my skills and how to incorporate different softwares into my practice and work. This information will help me create new animations and models that are more ambitious and will help me reach my goals in the future.

CRM Studios Interview Notes

1. Can you give me a description of what you do on a day to day basis?
2. How much time do you spend on the various aspects of your job?
 - a. The amount of time spent on any given project or task is determined by budget, deadlines and how many projects are happening at the same time.
3. What is the most challenging part of your job? How do you face these challenges?
 - a. Staying up to date on new technology is the most difficult part of being in the animation industry.
4. What is the most rewarding part of your job?
5. What skills are most important for animators? Fine arts, principles of animation or technology?
 - a. Having an understanding of basic art concepts.
 - b. Having patience and being able to listen to advice and implement critiques.
6. What advice do you have for someone who wants to enter the animation industry?
 - a. Have a general background in art and take the animation and motion graphics classes offered in college.
7. What resources would you suggest to someone who wants to go into animation or modeling?
 - a. When fixing problems use forums for your software and youtube videos on issue.
8. What would you suggest someone do to improve modeling or animation skills?
 - a. When you want to learn something new follow tutorials on youtube and other resources.
9. Would you consider recommending any colleagues that I might interview as well? If so would you mind if I used your name when contacting them?
 - a. Recommending speaking to someone at Janimation since they have good work and a VR setup.
10. Have you worked in other areas of the animation pipeline such as modeling, lighting or rigging? If so why did you decide to specialize in animation?
 - a. Generalist in a small studio so he has worked in many areas.
11. What softwares are used by this studio? Do they include Maya, Zbrush or Photoshop?
 - a. Autodesk Maya and 3Ds Max along with the Adobe suite.
12. As an animator how did you refine your understanding of the 12 principles of animation? Did you use specific books or resources to do this?
 - a. He found that in his line of work he did not need the twelve principles very much but used more general sketching and art techniques.
13. As a modeler do you make low poly models or is that not necessary? Furthermore, how do you work with the other departments such as art and rigging on your models?

- a. Works in low poly and slowly makes a high poly. Polygon count not always important outside of video game industry.