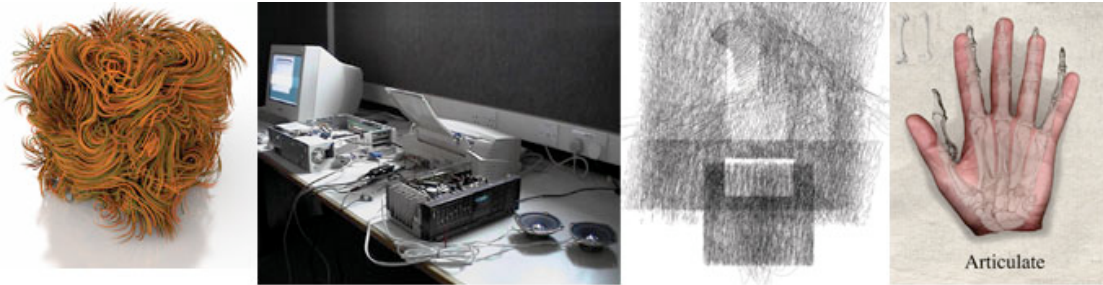


SIGGRAPH 2004 LOS ANGELES – The future as seen from the inside

By Joseph Lefèvre*

Translation by Juan Pablo di Ielle, Montreal SIGGRAPH Chapter

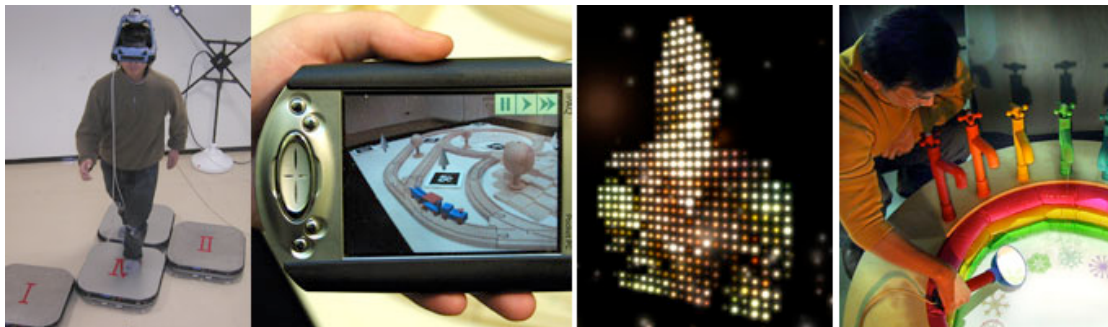
Sunday, August 8th, 2004. In Los Angeles, it's 8 a.m. The sun shines on the city. The smog covers parts of it, but there are palm trees. The L.A. Convention Center architecture is modern, with white and blue tints, volumetric, displaying a glass façade as high as a ten-story building. Welcome to SIGGRAPH 2004. First contact: registration, mandatory to give access to the activities offered to attendees. There's nothing like being on site and waiting nervously with the crowd for the doors opening.



Extraits de l'exposition artistique / Artworks from the artistic exhibition

For four days, technology lovers will have a complete panorama of the hottest in computer graphics and interactive techniques. On top of the exhibition that hosts the most dynamic companies presenting their latest products, the SIGGRAPH conference offers a very rich program. The arts exhibit gathers original pieces triggering either interest or astonishment, with an overall tendency towards *visual arts*, that is, featuring lots of prints, gravures, photos, but also featuring a few installations. The Emerging Technologies section offers *avant-gardiste* and highly diverse projects, with a few virtual reality and robotics innovations. The Guerrilla Booth is a real camp trenced with electronic hackings initiated by universities, schools and research centers. There you can get your own 3D volumetric scan, see a giant sand printer at work, wear a motion capture suit, attends drawing workshops on graphics tablets, etc.

The SIGGRAPH conference also offers a complete program of specialized courses ranging from computer animation techniques to the most advanced topics in the field, texturing, algorithms, specialized techniques. There are workshops in which developers give demonstrations, as well as presentations in which researchers and developers present their realizations. You can find a job center flooded with the 3D industry specialists. And of course, you can attend the most awaited evening of the conference: the Electronic Theater, presenting nothing less than the best computer animation short movies in the world.



Technologies émergentes / Emerging Technologies

The Electronic Theater offers the best computer animation creations selected by a jury of professionals. Visitors have also access to a few smaller theaters in which the long versions of some of the Electronic Theater movies, as well as other shorts, as presented continuously.

If you are interested in knowing more about this, you can read Tai-San Choo's *Magically Twisted Commercial Paraphernalia, The Computer Animation Theater* (<http://www.siggraph.org/conferences/reports/s2004/exhibits/animationtheater.html>).

The quality of this year's selection was outstanding. The diversity of the proposed works, the content's originality and processing, the technological breakthroughs demonstrated in the texture usage, in the evolution of synthetic lighting and reflections, in the modeling of objects, characters and landscapes, as well as in visual effects, was simply breathtaking. Scientific simulation also takes its place, like in one of the animation works in which thousands of chairs see themselves tortured by gravity in a magnificent tumbling and collapsing... excellent! We could notice a tendency towards dark images, and the creation of frightening and uncomfortable universes. But at the end we ask for more...

I would like to mention one last word on the Electronic Theater, simply to highlight the special prize given to a Canadian film, *Ryan*, from Chris Landreth. Beyond the fact that I could attend a special presentation with the creator, beyond the fact that it is a Canadian creation, and beyond the fact that the main character lives in Montreal on the Saint Lawrence Boulevard, this short movie simply seduced the SIGGRAPH community by its poetry, its original visuals and its subject. The massive applauses were simply well deserved. This short movie is outstanding, sensitive and shocking. It tells, through an imaginary interview, the highs and lows of the main character, Ryan Larkin, Canadian Animator who, 30 years earlier, realized the most influents animation of its time at the NFB (National Film Board). Ryan today lives off welfare. He has drinking problems and asks for money on Montreal's *Main*. This original and sensitive short movie displays some psychedelic accents, slightly off-track. It feels like if the creator took a cap of acid in order to meet Ryan and share with us its picaresque and pitiful adventures. I sincerely hope that we'll have the occasion to invite the creator to Montreal to present its film through the ACM SIGGRAPH Montreal chapter or through the SAT. Why not!



Théâtre électronique / Electronic Theater

Four days go fast when you are at SIGGRAPH. We often leave with regrets. It's either too short, or we didn't have a chance to see everything we wanted to see. We should be able to clone ourselves temporarily to cover all the presentations. But we surely go home with the feeling of having attended the most recent creations in new technologies and having seen a glimpse of the future. For all of you that couldn't attend, the local chapters are there to bridge the gap. SIGGRAPH 2006 will be in Boston, so east-cost fellows, Quebequers among them, should be able to get there easily. Get ready!

** Joseph Lefèvre is member of ACM SIGGRAPH and of its Montreal chapter. On top of following an artistic carrier in new medias, he works at the Society for Arts and Technology (SAT) as director of artistic residences and coordinator of different activities like the [mix_sessions] (Vjs/Djs/LIVE). He is the initiator of the ANIMA festival, a computer animation showcase.*