

YOWZA DIGITAL ANIMATES 1968 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION RIOT FOR “CHICAGO 10”

Brett Morgen Documentary Opens 2007 Sundance Film Festival

TORONTO, Canada (February 19, 2007) -- Toronto-based animation studio Yowza Digital, Inc. recreated the infamous riot that erupted during the 1968 Democratic National Convention for the new documentary film CHICAGO 10. Written and directed by Brett Morgen (THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE, ON THE ROPES), CHICAGO 10 was chosen as the opening night film at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

CHICAGO 10 explores the build-up and aftermath of the anti-war demonstrations staged during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, during which protesters clashed with the Chicago Police Department and the National Guard. Following the riots, eight activists were held accountable for the violence and brought to trial in the Chicago Conspiracy Trial of 1969. The film presents contemporary history through a mix of bold and original animation with extraordinary archival footage that allows the film to move back and forth between the protests on the streets of Chicago and the resulting courtroom chaos.

After several weeks of discussion with the director, Yowza Digital was invited in October 2006 to make a pitch for the Lincoln Park riot sequence. Inspired by visual cues within the archival footage of the actual riot, Yowza proposed the monochromatic look and feel of a graphic comic book, combining original animation with real elements enhanced with a smattering of color.

Morgen loved the company's creative concept and after he signed off on the design of several key scenes, production was quickly underway. Due to the film's accelerated schedule, Yowza began the project without the luxury of pre-vis in mid-October and delivered two minutes of animation on January 10, 2007.

While the sequence timing was being locked, the Yowza animation team, under the supervision of executive producer Pete Denomme, began working on the board panels and character designs. Since both 2D and 3D elements were needed, Yowza combined forces with their visual effects division, Switch VFX, and employed Maya, Maya's Paint Effects, Toon Shader, Photoshop, Toonboom's Harmony and Digital Fusion in a hybrid pipeline. Traditional layouts were created for each scene and scanned for the 3D artists to begin building necessary background elements. The scanned layouts were then given to the 2D animators, who traditionally animated the scenes; dialogue was also handled frame by frame. The scenes were line tested within the sequence for approvals on timing and look.

After the 2D animation was completed, the elements were digitally inked and painted for final composite. All the 3D and 2D elements and layers, including atmospheric smoke, fire, and flames, as well as photoreal sky plates, were combined in Inferno.

Said Denomme, “Working with Brett Morgen was a highlight for all of us. His passion for the film was so compelling that he catalyzed our entire company when he came to Toronto to kick the project off. Combining the 2D, 3D and VFX capabilities of our business was a major success and has opened up incredible opportunities for hybrid approaches to future projects. And importantly, it was an honor to work on a film that has such resonance and the potential to inspire and create social change.”

About Yowza Digital, Inc.

Toronto-based Yowza Digital, Inc. was founded in 2003 by executive producer Pete Denomme, creative director Claude Chiasson and finance and business affairs executive Laurie Thompson to produce 3D animation for feature films and television. Yowza Digital is currently in production on “DinoSapien,” a live action and animated series from BBC Worldwide and CCI Entertainment in association with Discovery Kids and CBBC.

Switch VFX is the visual effects division of Yowza Digital. Switch VFX specializes in the production of photorealistic digital visual effects and CG character creation for feature films and television. Switch VFX was founded in 2004 by visual effects supervisor Jon Campfens, executive producer Pete Denomme and finance and business affairs executive Laurie Thompson, all of whom have had distinguished careers in the industry, with the intent to bring experience and talent to a highly responsive, affordable and independent new venture.

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