



pixeltale

Marco Antonio Delgado

1. Please introduce yourself?

I began working in design making traditional drawings in paper, drawing comics. Soon when seeing the possibilities that the computer brought me I began to use it learning, little by little, the design in 2D and digital illustration, and I decided to dedicate me to the design.

After a course of three years in a private school in Madrid (Spain) I took a degree of Graduate Multimedia. Later I poured out to make designs in 3D, although I also like the 2D drawing and the photographic retouching, as well as the design and programming of web sites and the creation of multimedia products.

I made a Master's Degree in 3D Animation and Digital Post-production using Lightwave 3D. Together with 4 partners I founded a 3D animation studio, which I left to have a solo career as a 3D artist. I began to use Softimage XSI because it gave me more freedom to design and it is a more powerful and complete software.

This year I am immersed in the creation of the Pixeltale studio, oriented to 3D design, animations and graphical design.

2. Your computer platform: PC/Mac? CPU? RAM? 2d/3d software? Printer? Scanner?

Platform: PC.

Pentium 4 with a Intel processor to 3Ghz.

1.5 Gb Ram memory DDR2.

Hard disk: 80 Gb

Graphic card: QuadroFX 540.

Pen tablet Wacom Graphics3 A4.

Software 2D: Adobe Photoshop CS2.

Software 3D: Softimage XSI 5.0, Lightwave 3D 8.5 and Zbrush 2.0.

Scanner HP and printer Epson Stylus 680.

3. Which 3D software do you like best? Why?

I think the best 3D Software is Softimage XSI that is the one that I use at the moment.

Previously I used Lightwave 3D, but I changed to Softimage XSI because, in my opinion, it is much more powerful.

It is very complete and it has all the things needed to make spectacular models and images without any external plug-in, and with a well structured and clear interface. It has exceptional tools to model, by polygons or with nurbs, being able to model easily both organic and mechanic objects. We can apply many deformers and effects to our models, increasing the possibilities of making complex and detailed forms, and to vary the values of these deformations whenever we want.

It has a very powerful and complete editor of textures, we can create all type of materials, shaders, for the models and the lights. Its editor to apply projections is also very complete and easy to learn, although it seems very complex in the beginning.

It has a module to create fantastic hair and textures of hair, obtaining very good results of fur, grass, etc. We can apply it dynamics, wind, collisions, to comb it, to cut it or to apply it different shaders.

Its particles system is very complete. We can create explosions, liquids, rain, replace particles by objects and to create thus clusters of bees, insects, birds, multitudes and that collide with other objects. We can also apply physical forces, such as gravity, turbulences, magnetic fields, vortices, etc.

With regard to the simulation of collisions of RigidBodyes and SoftBodies it is splendid, obtaining dynamic simulations 100% real and accurate.

The animation of characters is wonderful, the possibilities are infinite. The creation of bones, rigs and setups for our characters is very powerful and simple, for the animation with direct or inverse kinematics.

The illumination and the render are exceptional. We can reach hyper realistic results with global illumination or final gathering. The motor of render is the famous MentalRay, the best one of the market together with RenderMan of Pixar.

With its module of composition and post-production we can give to our designs a more spectacular finishing.

In short, it is a perfect 3D software for making any kind of designs and animations.

4. What are the most common problems involved during modelling process? How Did you solve these problems?

The main problem is to obtain a model as realistic as possible, mainly in organic modelling of characters, humans, animals or creatures. It is a more laborious and complicated process depending on the type of character.

When the characters are "toon" type it is simpler because I can exaggerate its characteristics and I do not have to follow any fixed proportion, on the contrary, it is necessary to exaggerate the characteristics of the character to give it a certain personality and make it more amusing.

Modelling animals or creatures is different because I must to make them as realistic as possible and I must give the measures and proportions they have in the real life, unless I make any fantastic animal.

All this implies that the mesh of the model becomes denser and with more polygons, being complicated its later handling and animation. Therefore, I analyze the animal or creature I want to create in order to know which parts must be modelled with more detail. Those with less details can be textured in a way that seems more detailed than they are in fact, thus I have models with less details and easier to handle.

Also if I am going to animate the model, I must know which parts are going to be animated, to add to more polygons in different zones like elbows, knees, etc in order to avoid strange folds of the mesh. In order to model them with the correct scale and the maximum detail, I use blueprints.

I avoid the appearance of triangular polygons in the models, because they cause me more problems, although sometimes they are essential so that not appear polygons with more than 4 points.

5. How to create a perfect 3D model?

To make a perfect model in 3D is something very complicated and a few can get it.

In my case, I try to give the highest detail. I study photos and drawings in order to inform me how is the model I am going to create. I try to see it from all its perspective and angles to know all its details and parts.

I choose the type of modelling more suitable, by polygons or by means of "nurbs", although I prefer polygons.

When I got a model that I like, I textured it as real as possible. I compile photographs to get the textures which are useful as guide to create or to paint them. Also I scan the textures that need.

If I must add hair to it, I try to simulate it with textures and with bump, if not I use the hair module to create it.

Finally, the main and most important step is the illumination of the scene and the model, it is almost 50% of the success of the project.

To get a perfect model is the whole of these three things, if one of them faults, our model will not be perfect.

6. What are your sources of inspiration?

My sources of inspiration are varied. I pay much attention to the world of the cinema, mainly of science fiction, films of Steven Spielberg and George Lucas who are two magicians of the cinema, just like John Lasseter of Pixar. Action, historical or martial arts films, emphasizing Akira Kurosawa.

Also I am inspired by the natural world, wild animals, submarine world or mythological beings and animals.

The observation of the world surrounding us is a source of inexhaustible inspiration, although the simplest scene, objects or creatures, can give us a good idea for a design. The originality is a very important thing.

The literary and historical legends are another point of reference and with the marvellous imagination of my wife Paloma I get some ideas very original and interesting.

7. How to be a good 3D artist? Tell us some suggestions?

To be a good 3D artist it is necessary to have a lot of constancy, patience, originality, thirst for design interesting things and stories and a research work is essential.

On this it will depend we reach the level of great 3D artists as those working in Industrial Light and Magic, Pixar or Wetta Digital.

There are a lot of suggestions, depending on the artist, but I think that the patience is very important, it is necessary to continue working until we obtain the idea we had, and not giving up until we reach our objective.

Something essential both in 3D and 2D design is to make all the sketches we need with a paper and a pencil, to structure the work, to get all the necessary information and to have an exact idea about what we want to create.

After following these steps, we are able to begin modelling. To improvise or to have no clear ideas will delay our work and we will not make any 3D design of quality.

Also it is necessary to try to be original and to create things that nobody has done before.

We will not have to make very complex models, because sometimes a simple idea is more brilliant and it allows us to reach a perfect 3D model of high quality. Mainly, it is necessary to avoid a very typical mistake in some images, we do not want that our model seems to be a 3D model, we will have to make scenes and images where everything is not perfect and ordered, it must have chaos, dirt, worn away, as it happens in the real life.

It is very important to observe other artists, how they have made a work, an animation, thus we will be able to avoid mistakes, clarify doubts and see which methods are the best to get perfect models.

8. What is the most interesting thing when you create a 3D artwork?

Obviously, the most interesting is to see the model and the scene totally finished.

The process I enjoy more is the moment of texturing the model and the process to illuminate the scene and make the test renders, and to correct any failure, in this moment is when I see that the work begins to have good it forms.

It is very interesting to vary the values in illumination and to see how a scene can have one or another style, and to try to make realistic renders. It is a very gratifying challenge but at the same time it is very frustrating if we do not see good results. The illumination is very important in 3D design, we must model with light, because a bad illumination can do that our design mediocre or on the contrary, with a model moderately good and a well-taken care of illumination we can reach spectacular results.

The post-production of an image is something very important, because it allows you to give last adjustments, to apply any effect, to alter colours, brightness, etc.

The process of animation is also very interesting to me, to see our models in action is something very exciting. It is a process quite complicated if we want to create a convincing animation.

9. What's your opinion about Asia 3D artist?

The Asian artists are of the best ones of the world in design 3D.

To take an obvious example, George Lucas has inaugurated in Singapore the Lucasfilm Animation studio, because as he said, the Asian animators have many talent.

Also in the world of the videogames we see spectacular animations and designs coming from Asia. I have heard about Hideki Sasaki, Robert Chang, Yoichiro Kadoguchi, Liu Zhiji, Kazuhiko Nakamura, or Cameron Miyasaki from Pixar.

I think that their style is different from the one of the occidental artists, because they combine the designs with technological appearance with their traditional and old culture obtaining some models and images very impressive and original.

10. Do you have any plan for the future?

Yes, a lot. I have been working in 3D design for a short time, I must learn many things and to continue working, but I want to create an animation studio someday and to make films, TV series or spots.

I would like to have enough experience to reach the quality of Dreamworks or Pixar.

It would very important for me, in a near future, to be able to make effects and animations or to work with Steven Spielberg or George Lucas.

I think that with effort, improving little by little, patience and humility, Pixeltale will be one of the most important studio of the 3D animation a near future.

11. Which artwork you send to us is your best choice? Why?

Well, I like all very much because I have tried to give them realism and I care the details of each one.

Perhaps the one I prefer is Laboratory, because although it is a very simple model and the scene is not complex, but it was difficult to make the glass material.

It is an instrument of a chemistry laboratory, that is a typical apparatus of scientists.

I wanted to give a very clean style, very neutral, avoiding the strong colours or other elements that bothered, I wanted to show the delicacy of the glass and this instrument.

Also I like Spider, it is an image that began like a challenge, because I wanted to make an animal and both, insects and spiders, have always attracted me. I gave it a certain threatening air and I place it in an old room, like if it could live in the attic of our house.

Moreover to apply the hair was something very interesting. I had never used it before with Softimage XSI and I wanted that it was as real as possible.

12. Your home address or studio address? Your website address, e-mail address?

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