Issue

7

May
2011

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dreamers displaying their talent for all
to see and be
inspired. In the world of 3D art,
Carrara 3D Expo is the place of dreams.

Carrara

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Jeffrey Felt 2011

Shader Toolkit –
Metallics

by Dimension Theory

I've created a package containing 80 different shaders for Carrara which are set up in a way that provides a learning experience. There are 10 separate sets of 8 shaders, with each set introducing a more elaborate shader concept than the last. In this guide, you will find a rundown of each shader set as well as some general information about shaders and some ideas for taking these concepts further. While some may be more focused on the educational aspects, please feel free to use any of the included shaders for whatever projects you may have. Hopefully, this shader pack and tuition will prove useful in your work flow!

Please note that half of the included shaders require the Shader Ops plugin produced by Digital Carvers Guild to work properly. They may load well enough to give you a better understanding of the tuition, but they will have issues when rendered. Shader Ops is a great addition to any Carrara user's tool belt, and I highly recommend it.

01 – Glossed

This shader set is the basic foundation for the rest of the sets included. Not a whole lot of trickery going on here. One thing I would like to point out is the lack of true black in most of the color shaders. When thinking about color and light in real life, you can be assured that nothing is truly pure black (except of course for those pesky black holes). Reflecting this in our renders will give a better representation of our shader. The same thing can also be said for pure whites producing unrealistic highlights. Also, changing any unused shader channels to "None" is always a good idea for keeping a firm grasp on what your shaders are actually doing.

02 – Duos
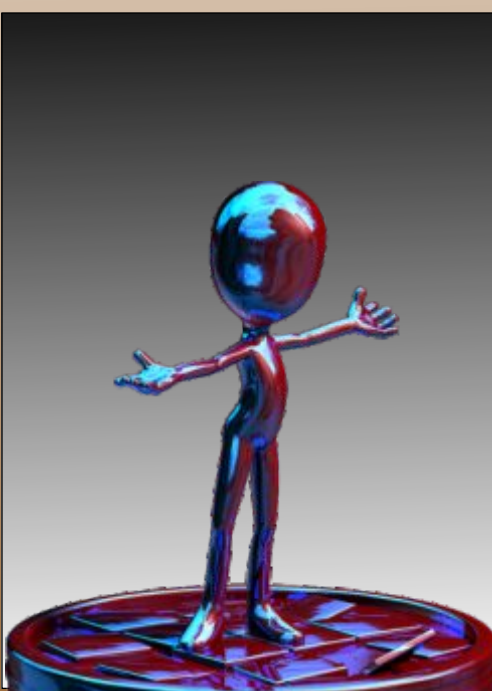
These shaders introduce the idea of using colored reflection channels in conjunction with solid color channels. There are certain cases in real life where a metallic surface will have a different color finish than it's base. Something that's rather popular in car paint is an effect where the tint changes hue when viewed from certain angles. Adding a colored reflection will help you achieve this effect and produce some very interesting results. Keep in mind that the color of surfaces being reflected will also affect the outcome of these shaders.

03 – Shaken

You'll find that these shaders are very render intensive. This is directly linked to the introduction of blurry reflections. After adding color to your reflection channel, you'll see that the hue change of reflections can be sharp and unnatural. When using blurry reflections, these sharp reflections will be blended in with the base color. Very nice results can be achieved this way, especially between two surfaces which are close to each other in your render.

I've also started using colored highlights with these shaders, which adds to the effect produced by the reflections. Difference being that this effect depends solely on the lighting in your scene. Used along with colored reflections you can achieve a surface with three different tones. While this isn't something you see often in real life, it can be very fun to play with.

04 – Stirred

Here you will start to find mixers, which are in my opinion the core of what gives Carrara's shader room so much depth. These aren't your grandma's cake mixers mind you, you can essentially mix everything with anything based on whatever you want. Having an understanding of what mixers do will help you find your way in the world of complex shading.

Source 1 and Source 2 are the channels that will be mixed together. These can be colors, textures, additional mixers, procedural effects or any other type of channel. How they are mixed together depends on what is plugged into the Blender channel, which in turn can also be mapped to any other type of channel.
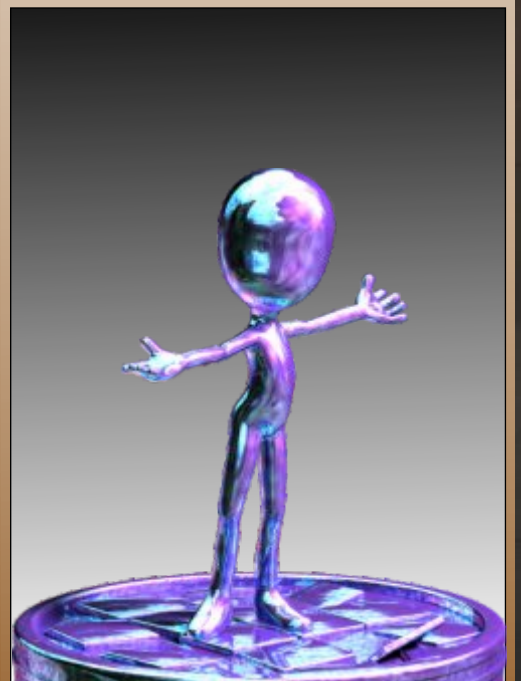
When working with mixers, it's important to remember that anything used in the Blender channel will be treated as black and white. The Blender channel only looks at the brightness of what you put there, assigning a value of 100% to the brightest portions and 0% to the darkest. Assuming the Blender channel is black and white, Source 1 will be sent to all black areas while Source 2 will be sent to the white. Shades of gray within the Blender will produce a mix of the two sources (a red Source 1 with a blue Source 2 and 50% gray in the Blender will produce purple colors).

These mixers can be very useful when creating surfaces that aren't consistent. For example, a high gloss chrome shader can have it's reflection channel mixed based on a texture map to produce scratches in it's finish. In the case of these shaders I've mixed various colors together in order to produce splotches or swirls. Something that may happen on surfaces that have imperfect finishes, such as variable thicknesses of lacquer or toning.

05 – Sprayed

Each of these surfaces uses a fine grain bump map to produce a very rough finish. This is a method I use on numerous other types of shaders (anything from skin to cloth) when I find them to be a little to smooth. When amplified on reflective shaders as they are in this set, you can achieve some very nice glitter effects. You can also get somewhere close to a faster rendering blurry reflection solution, though I've not been able to get Carrara to produce noise on a small enough scale to get great results.

These shaders use the Cellular noise channel because it gives a decent amount of control, but nearly all noise shaders can produce the same effect. Most simple would probably be the Spots shader under Natural Functions. Using this with both values at 0 you will get what I believe is the smallest scale noise Carrara is currently able to produce.

06 – Fresnel

The shaders here are the start of the ShaderOps requirement. One of the included procedurals in Shader Ops is a function called Fake Fresnel. Depending on your camera angle, this effect fades between the inner and outer edges of your model using a gray scale gradient. When using this as the Blender for mixer functions, you can achieve a variety of neat and useful effects.

For the shaders included here, the Fake Fresnel function is used to emphasize the reflective edges on the shaders. You'll often see reflective surfaces in everyday life producing a sort of halo effect at it's edges. Curved reflective surfaces actually do a good job of diverting lighting from behind them, so this halo is light hitting the back side of these surfaces and being redirected to your eyes. Using Fake Fresnel you can fake this effect, or exaggerate it for some cool results. Another use would be to fake subsurface scattering that you may find in skin shaders.
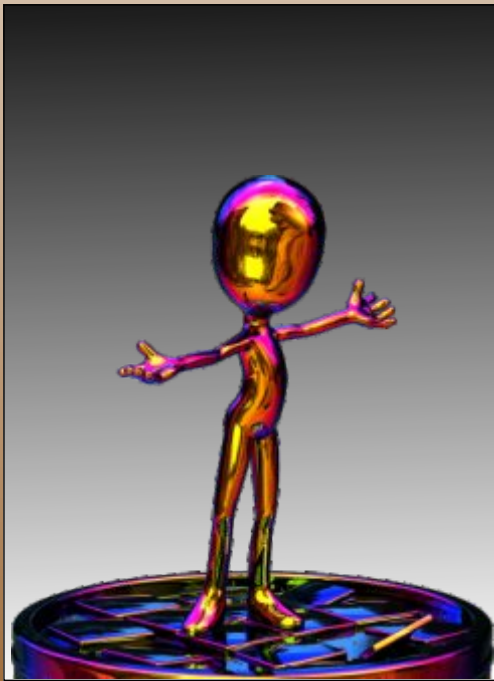

07 – Gradient

I make heavy use of the Color Gradient function, and that is what you'll find here. This function allows you to specify a gradual change between colors, and provides you with a Blender channel in which to drive it. In the default configuration, anything black in the Blender shows the Color Gradient's dark blue while white shows the light blue (and gray values will, of course, produce a mix). Keep in mind that the Color Gradient uses the Blender's black to white from left to right.

Most of these shaders use the Color Gradient driven by Fake Fresnel to produce a color fade from the center outward. The same results can be achieved by mixing two color channels, but the Color Gradient function simplifies your shader tree by taking up one less slot while providing more in depth control. For this reason I use it exclusively for any color changes from the start to keep things simple throughout my work flow, only using the regular mixer function when using texture maps or other functions.
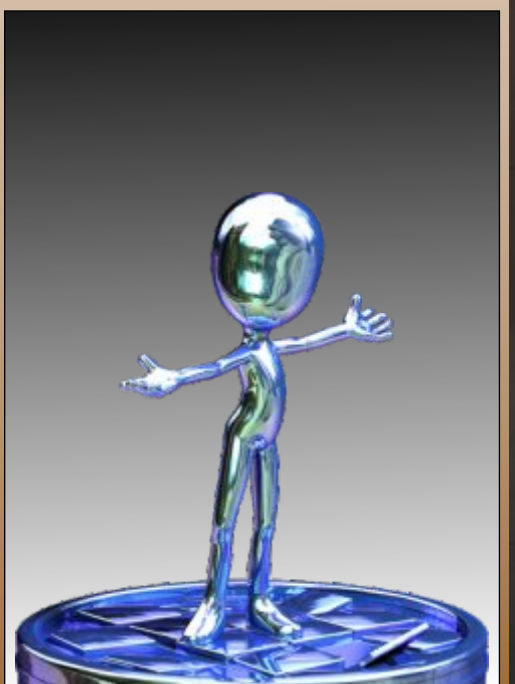
08 – Oiled

This is where the Color Gradient's true power comes into play. You can add as many color points to the gradient display as you like, and they will all follow the same mapping (black to white from left to right). So you can have a rainbow of colors being mixed together based on the Blender. When this is mapped to our figures using the Fake Fresnel function, it will produce some really nice iridescence effects. These can be extremely useful for bubbles, bismuth, oiled water, abalone and so on.

Getting the hang of using the Color Gradient in this way opens you up to a lot of interesting things. I've even managed to drive simple animations by particle age using a mixture of multi-channels with this. Blending with noise functions can produce some great pin stripe and fractal effects. Just remember the Color Gradient itself can be used to drive any other function. You're not limited to mapping it to top level channels.

09 – Multi
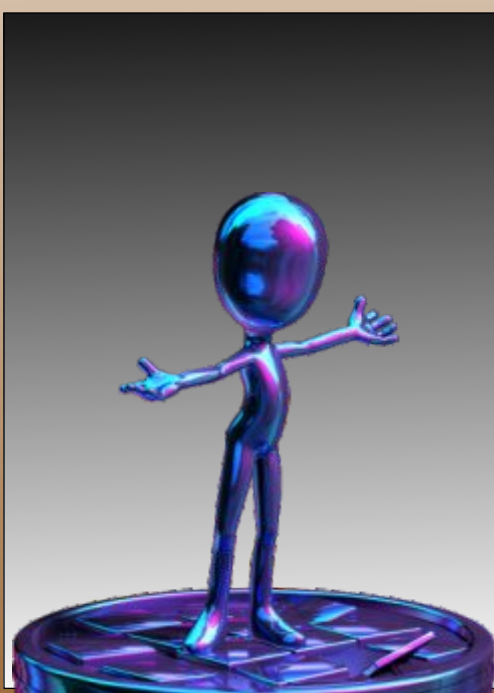
Here I started taking the Color Gradient a step further, adding black between colors to produce multi-colored stripes driven by the Blender. Under both the highlight and reflection channels I'm also doing what I call "multi-mixing", as I'm mixing together multiple mixer functions. Carrara will allow you to mix any number of mixers together to be blended together by any number of Blenders. Things start to get confusing really fast though, which is why it's important to keep your tree as simplified as possible.

Within my multi-mixing, you can see I've inserted an Add function adding colors to the Color Gradient. This lets me stack the effects from the "07-Grad" shaders on top of our striped designs. Both of the Color Gradient functions are exactly the same, but since one has an additional color added over it, the multi-mixed Blender will fade between the original Color Gradient and one of a slightly different hue. A

case where this would be useful is when you have a procedural cloth shader created using a Color Gradient, yet want to add some stains to certain portions. Using the Add function, you can quite literally add stains to the already existing cloth pattern. The actual design within the pattern will be retained when the tint of the stain is applied.

10 – MixCraft

These are some interesting shaders I made to better display the ability to mix together multiple procedurals. Both the highlight and reflection channel are mixing together two Color Gradient patterns of different complexity based on a Fake Fresnel Blender. The outside edges are "in general" generated on a smaller scale, making them much more noisy than the inside. This results in a more pronounced pattern when viewed from side angles.

Concepts used here are something I find myself using in the Bump Map channel often. By mixing together two patterns of different scale or complexity, you can form portions of a shader which are smooth while making other portions rough. It can be useful when creating rough surfaces which have been worn down over time. For instance, mixing together a rough dry dirt surface with patches of smooth wet mud.
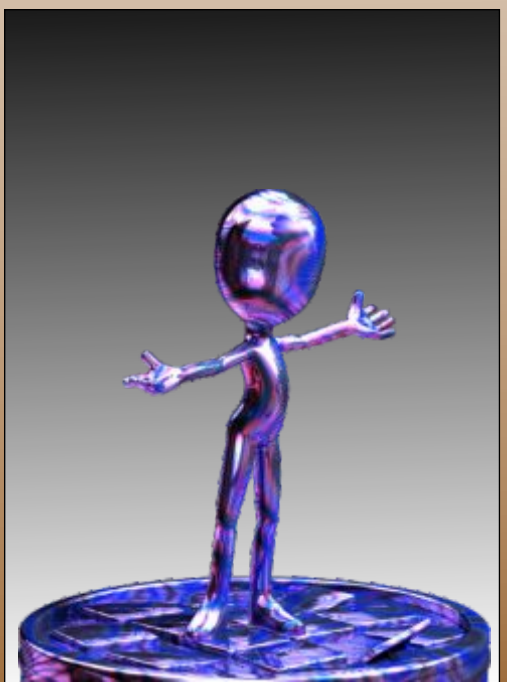
Shaders are available in zipped files of C3DE07.
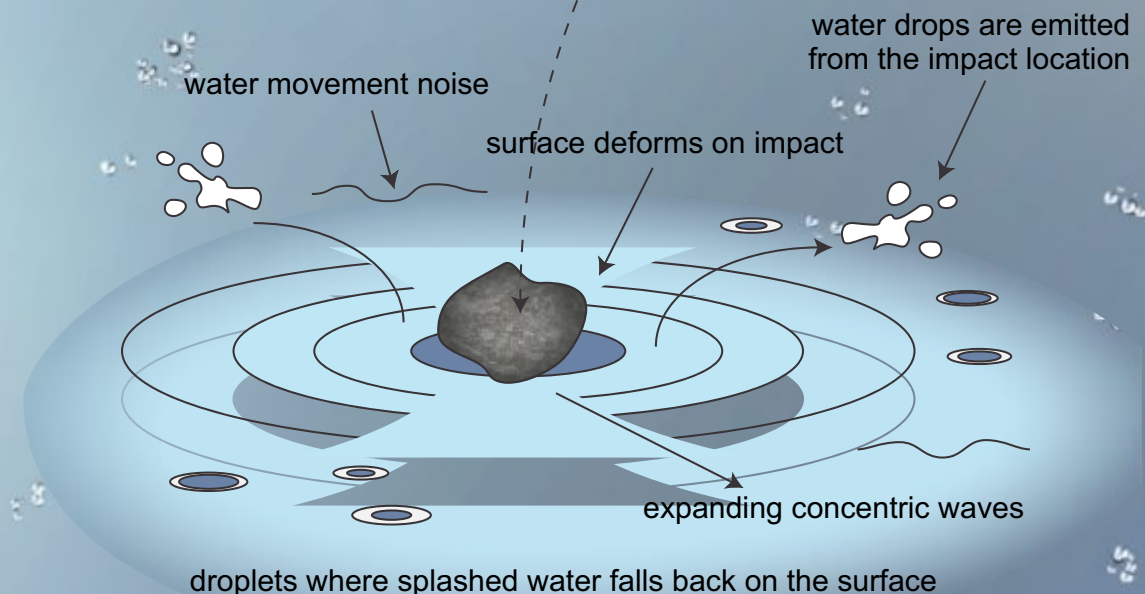See www.carrara3dexpo.com for more information.

More about Dimension Theory at www.3dimensiondigital.com

How-to create an animated splash with meta-particles and an animated water shader in Carrara
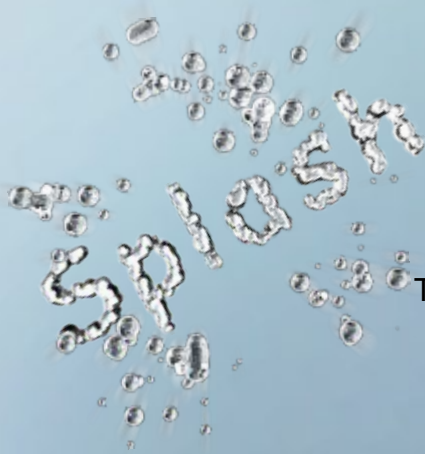
This is a short description of the example scene and illustrates how the scene was created. The rendered animation can be found at: http://www.vimeo.com/19398027

What happens after an object hits the water surface?

water movement noise

water drops are emitted from the impact location

surface deforms on impact

expanding concentric waves

droplets where splashed water falls back on the surface

To see what kind of effects are necessary the animation has to be analyzed. The stone starts to fall down in frame 12. It hits the water's surface in frame 23, touches the ground
in frame 24, bounces back and comes to rest in frame 30.
When the stone hits the water's surface, it bends down with the stone and then back up.
This causes circular waves to role from the impact center, decreasing and coming to rest again.
When the stone hits the surface, there is also some disturbance/noise, which fades and finally
comes to rest.
When the stone hits the water, drops are emitted from the point of impact, but only
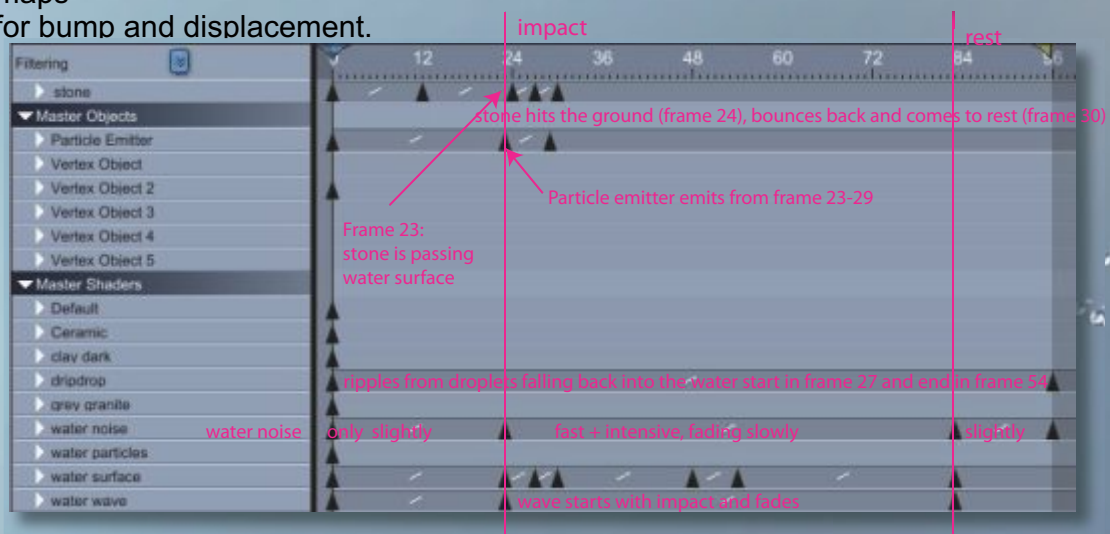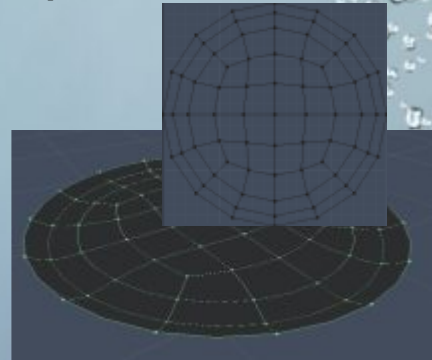for a very short amount of time. Some drops hit the walls of the mug, some fall back into the water.
When the droplets fall back into the water, they make ripples at the water's surface.

## How to create the different parts of the splash

All water surface deformations have been created with animated shaders,
while the water drops have been created with a metaball particle emitter.

The water surface is a round vertex object with a slightly
concave meniscus at the border and some levels of subdivision
applied for a smooth displacement.
It has a planar UV mapping, so it can take texture maps
for bump and displacement.

impact   rest

Filtering
stone
Master Objects
Particle Emitter
Vertex Object
Vertex Object 2
Vertex Object 3
Vertex Object 4
Vertex Object 5
Master Shaders
Default
Ceramic
clay dark
dripdrop
grey granite
water noise
water particles
water surface
water wave

stone hits the ground (frame 24), bounces back and comes to rest (frame 30)

Particle emitter emits from frame 23-29

Frame 23:
stone is passing
water surface

ripples from droplets falling back into the water start in frame 27 and end in frame 54

water noise   only: slightly   fast + intensive, fading slowly   slightly

wave starts with impact and fades

If you have EnhanceC from Digital Carvers Guild the animated waves and ripples can be created procedurally, but since not everyone has this plugin
the example scene is using prerendered image sequences and an animated 3D noise shader instead.

The water shader is a basic transparent shader with
reflection, transparency and refraction. The water movement effects have been created with combined animated grayscale shaders in the
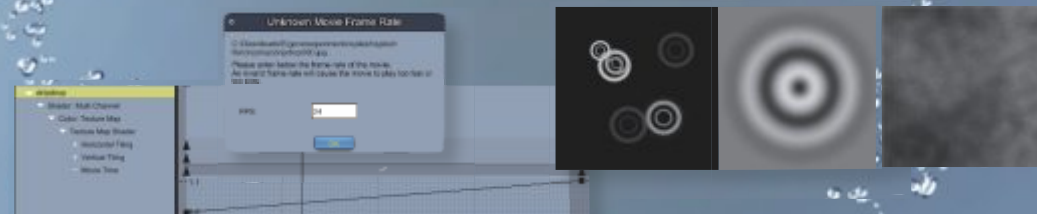
Grayscale shaders for noise, wave and ripples have been created separately, so they can control other channels of the water shader, like displacement and bump via reference shaders.

bump channel setup

To have more control over the amount of bump/displacement of these reference shaders, they are multiplied with with an animated
0 - 10000 value:
0 = the reference shader will be applied with 0% intensity
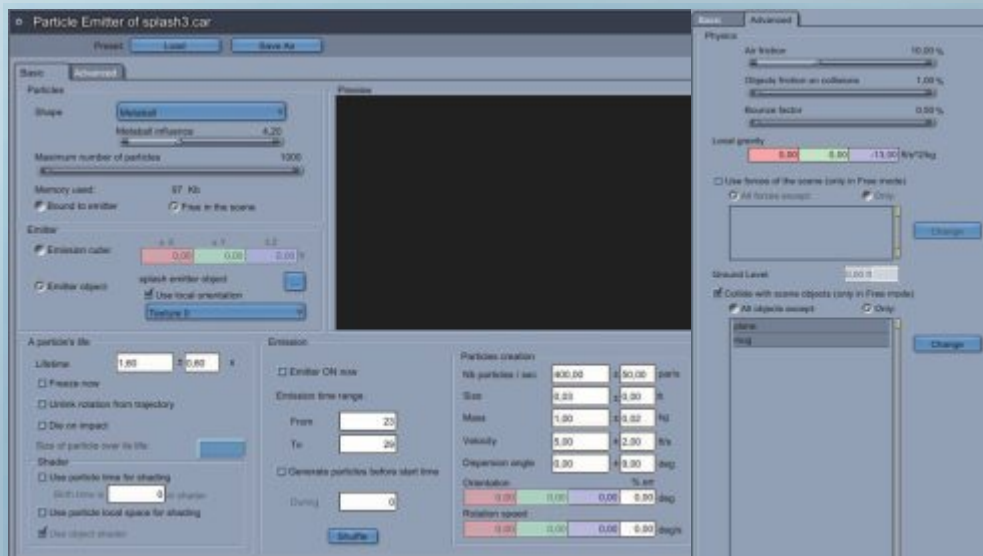10000 = the reference shader will be applied with 10000% intensity.
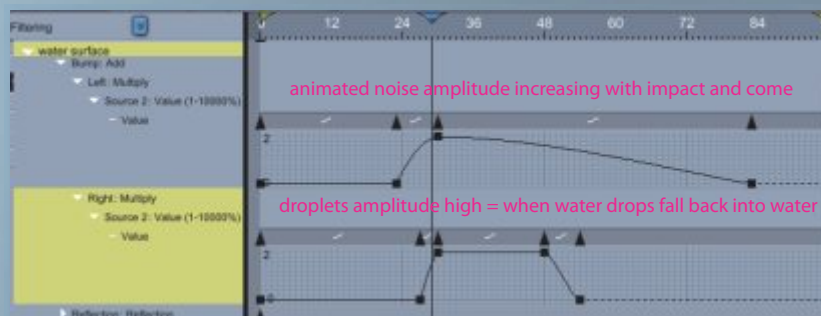
animated noise amplitude increasing with impact and come

droplets amplitude high = when water drops fall back into water

displacement channel setup

The splash is a metaball particle emitter. A hidden cone-shaped vertex object is the emitter object with "use local orientation" checked.
This starts the particle traveling in the right direction.
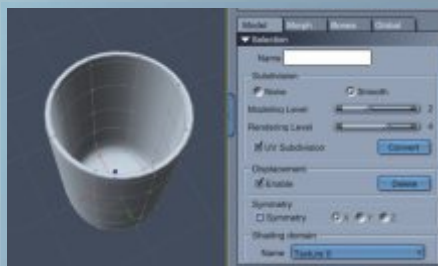
The mug is a simple vertex object with thickness, subdivision and a simple procedural shader.
It is also used as a collision object for the splash particles.

To add some more realism, a slight motion blur effect has been added in After Effects.
The particles' life time is set to about 1.5 seconds. The bounce factor is almost set to zero, so the water drops don't bounce back from the mug but run along the surface back into the water. The water surface is not used as collision object, so the water drops can fall back into the water and give the impression of bubbles.
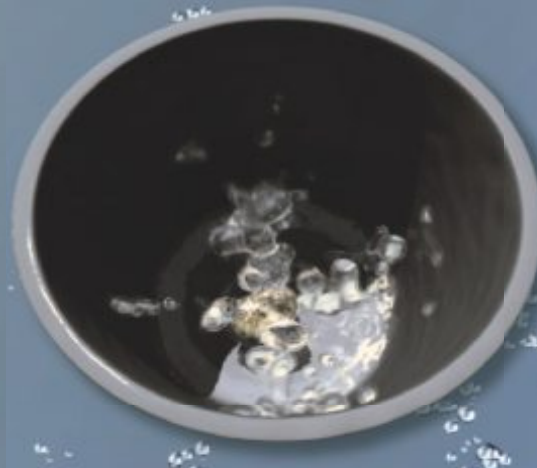
Scene files available in zipped versions of the magazine .
See www.carrara3dexpo.com for more information.

Sincerely,
Faba

Making of the Tick

Hello!

My name is Danas-Anis. I am also known as Jetbird_D2. In this short article, I will share with you some of the tricks I used to accomplish a visualization project about the tick. The video itself isn't anything great looking. However, some tricks I will share with you might be useful for your projects!
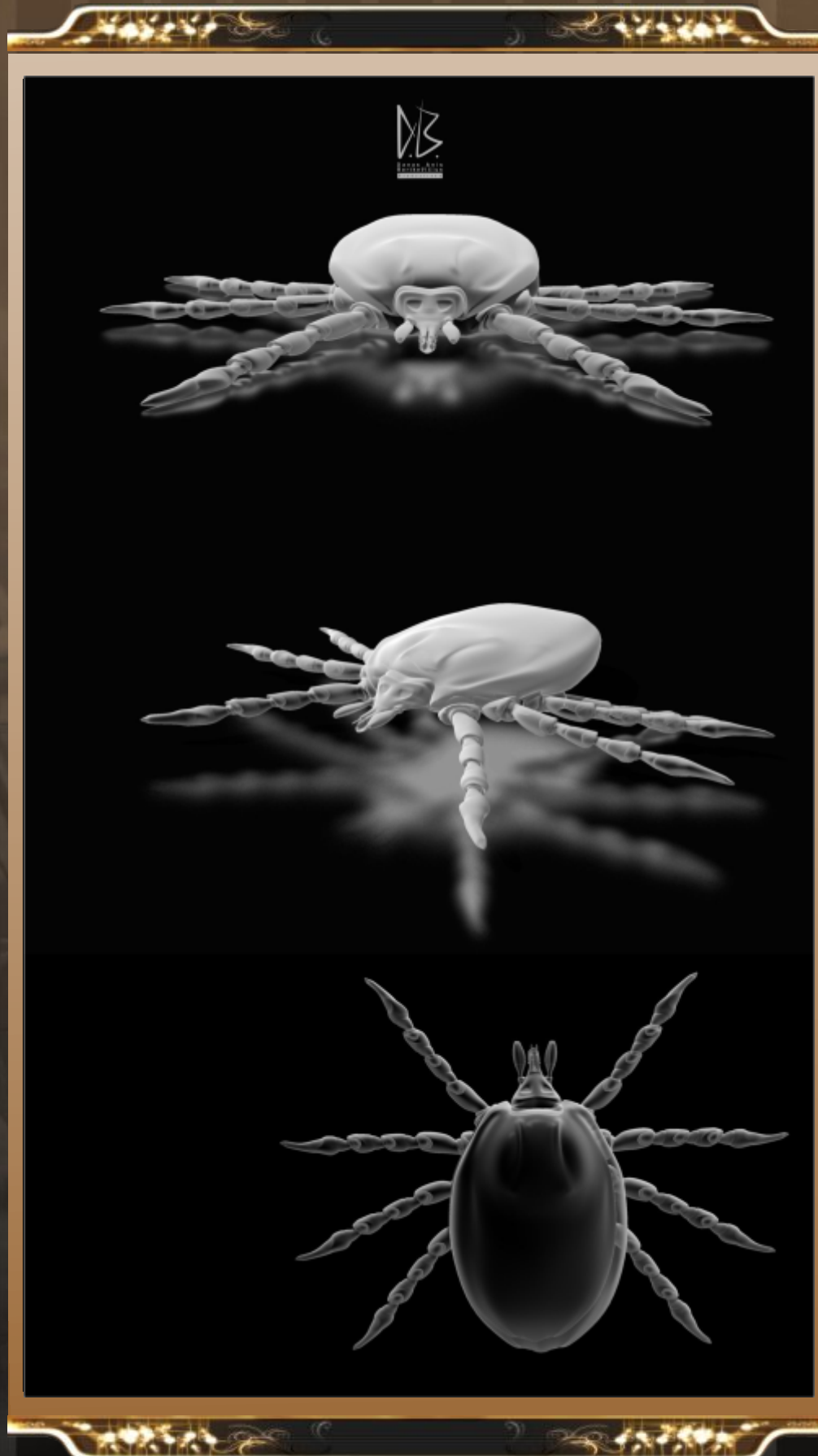
The first, and most essential, step is to gather as much reference material as possible and create a story board. Without a well thought out story board, most projects will fail. While in production of a story board, you should think about the best solutions to the shots and once you are done - no more messing around. Another very important thing to do is to follow the story board and not change the main concept.

Story boarding is usually one of the most annoying periods of production. If you have a tablet you can use it together with your favorite painting and
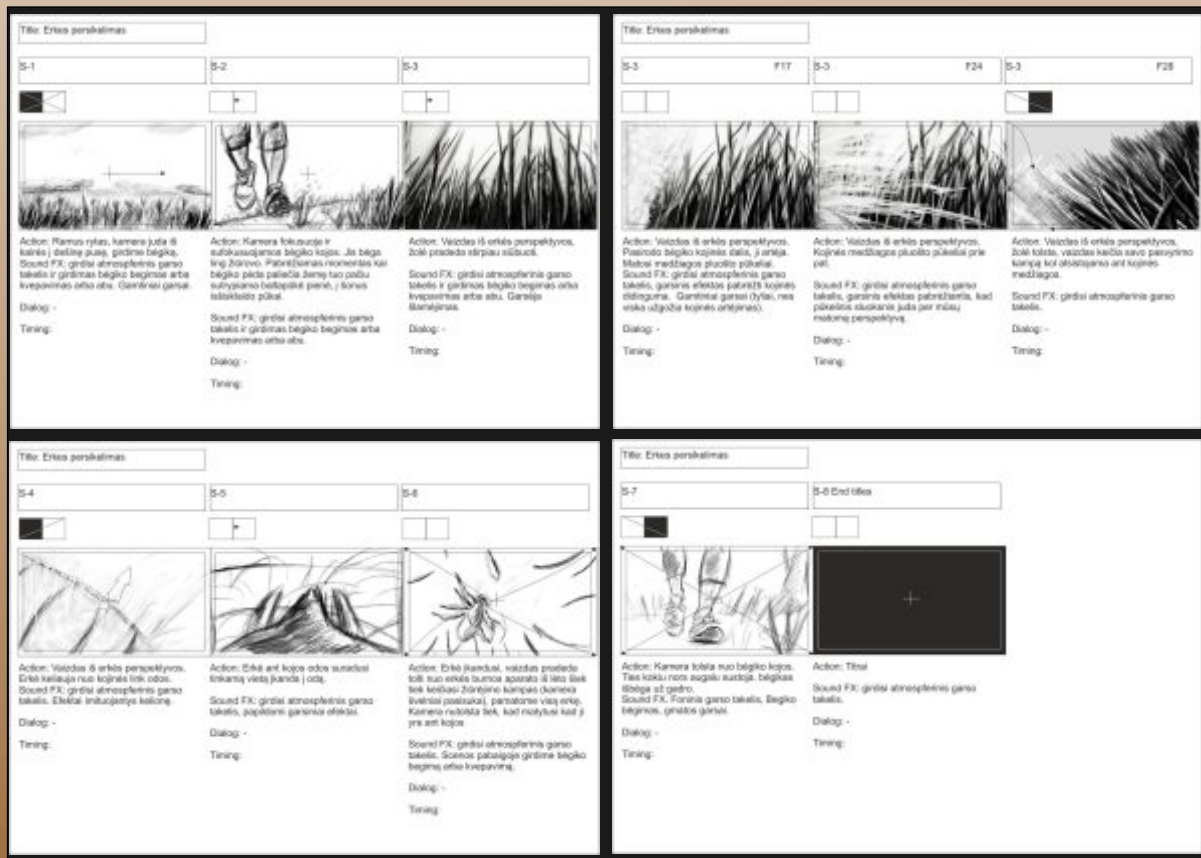
sketching software. My favorite at this time is Project Dog Waffle Pro 5. However you don't have to draw perfectly to make a story board. As long as you and the team you are working with understands it, you are good to go. And believe me, story boards can save you a lot of time later!

Once the story board is finished, another very advisable step to do is to create a blocking. Blocking is a video created from storyboard's still images. The shots of images are composed according to the planned timing of the video together with sound effects, pan and zooming.

Blocking allows you to predict possible issues, so you can prevent them when your project's production begins. You can also find out what changes should be made to make your project better.

Once I have a storyboard and blocking I know where to focus my efforts; where to add more detail and where I can fake it, so I have less work to do. I can also come up with a plan to reduce rendering time.

The first thing that I did, after the storyboard and blocking, was to better analyze the ticks. I am not very fond of ticks, so this was a very challenging task. Fortunately, I gathered a lot of observation material for the storyboard, so I didn't have to spend much time on references. Now, the modeling can begin.

I am a die hard Carrara user and do everything in Carrara. I use no external tools for modeling. Once you are accustomed to Carrara's modeling features and workflow, you begin to miss them in other 3D modeling applications. Can you tell I love Carrara?

The tick was the most difficult model to create. Not only are ticks scary creatures, but they also contain anatomy I have never observed before. In the 3D world, this isn't a problem. There isn't much that can't be made from a vertex cube. Carrara offers several modeling options, but I found good old box modeling to be the best way to go.

Once I finished with the tick, I had to think about shading. I didn't have to go very far for shading options. Carrara's Shader Room offers full featured texturing magic. The tick Shaders are fully procedural; no texture maps needed. Sparrowhawke 3D's Edge Fall Off plug-in was a big help for this step. It is an amazing little extension for Carrara that packs a big punch. If you can't afford DCG's Shader Ops plug-in, you need to check out Sparrowhawke's plug-in. I use it for almost all the shaders I create. It is really helpful in faking GI or SSS effects. It's also good for adding detail to your model.
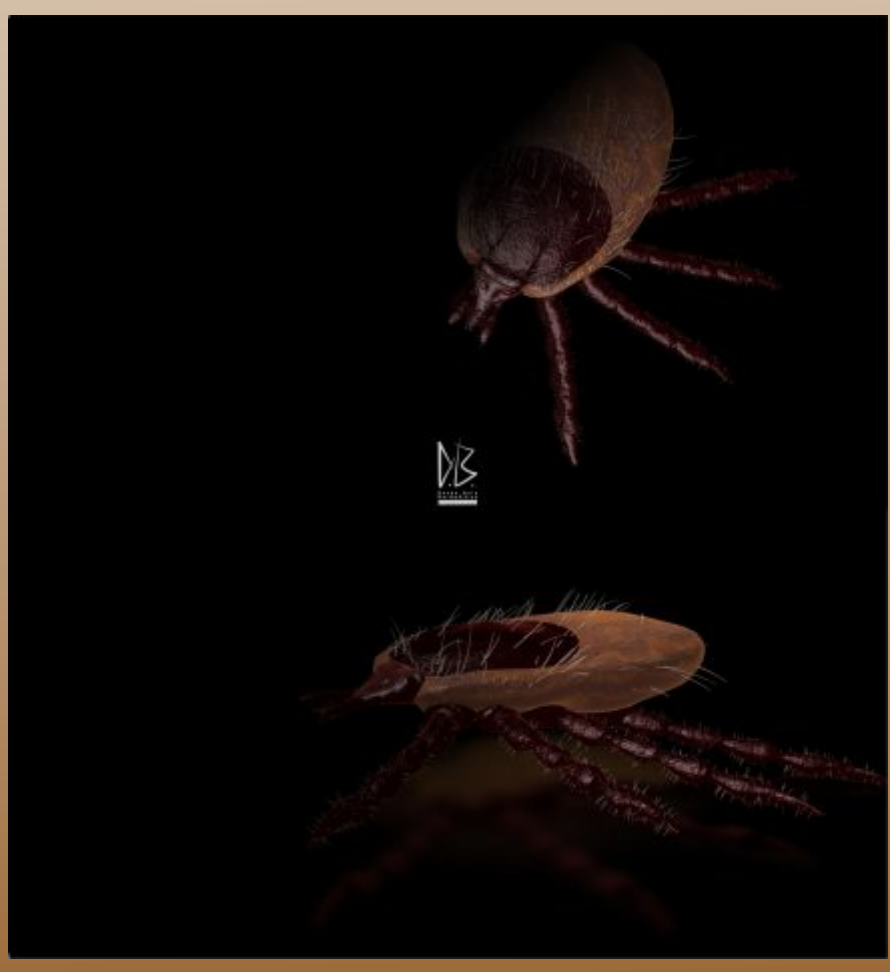
Like many creatures in our world, ticks have a hairy body. Although Carrara's dynamic hair serves very well in most situations that call for hair, it fails when DOF is needed. DOF was an important part of this project, so I had to go with something else. The hairs on the tick are polygonal hair strands. Sadly, I forgot about the spline primitives in Carrara. Spline primitives can serve as quite good hair objects.

The tick is not the only character in the story. It has a victim. For the story, we picked a very simple situation where a tick attacks a runner who decides to take a run in nature.

I gave some personality to the runner and named him Albert. It is a very good practice to give names to your characters. It helps to create a character for them during the very beginning.

According to the storyboard, we actually don't see Albert, we see only his legs. Thanks to the storyboard, I knew I didn't need to care about Albert's looks, so I didn't need to waste time creating the whole character. I just focused on his legs and feet. It sounds funny, but the creation of Albert began with a sport shoe. The most seen parts of Albert are shoes.

Again, there aren't many things that can't be done with box modeling.
If not for Sparrowhawke's Edge Fall Off plug-in, the sport shoe images on the right wouldn't have the impression of the detail it has now.

The sport shoe was modeled from a vertex cube in Carrara's Vertex model room.

Once I was happy with the sport shoe shape, I assigned shading domains for the shoe parts, and using Carrara's procedural features, I created shaders to give the shoe a material feel.

THESE ARE THE NEW AIR SHOES

For the rest of Albert, cylinder primitives were of a lot of help. In my experience, I have found that cylinders are good primitives to use as a base for just about any project. Another good practice is to save your models for use in later projects. For this project, I grabbed a leg from one of my previously created characters. I tweaked it to meet the requirements of this project and made a few fixes.

Cylinders are used to create Albert's shorts and socks. I wanted to use dynamic cloth for the shorts, but since Carrara has no dynamic cloth function I had to look for a different solution. After consulting with Sparrowhawke 3D, I went with his Cloth Deformer plug-in for the shorts. In order to get the best results I had to lose some details on the shorts and good riddance. According to Sparrowhawke3D, it is always better to have a less complicated geometry with no overlapping polygons.

Once I finished with the geometry, I went to work adding the details. The storyboard shows a world closer to the tick's perspective so details like cloth fiber are important. Due to the request of the client, Albert had to have hairy legs. Ticks are usually taken to the host body by hair on the skin or small fluffy layer on the cloth fiber. It was important to show this. I used Carrara's dynamic hair. The tricky part here is that in 3D what looks good in close up, doesn't always look good in long shots. I was able to cheat a bit on the socks by having two hairs; thick for the long shots and thin for the close ups, but I had to compromise with Albert by using quite thick hair on his legs. The reason was that even though the dynamic hairs were static, and I had show only guide lines selected, they added weight to the scenes. My hardware is quite old, and I didn't want to take the risk of adding too many resource intensive details. I have to confess I didn't imagine that the macro world had so many details.

Once I finished with the details, I animated the leg run. In this case, it was most

practical to use a tracing method to aid in animating the legs. I took a video of an easy running man and used it as a reference for the motion.

It was very easy to use video as a backdrop and add poses according to the video. A very good feature of Carrara is the NLA tracks. I just

animated one leg and then created an NLA clip to which I assigned loop animation . The other leg is a simple duplicate of the first leg. But thanks to some playback issues in the 3D view I still managed to run into some motion quirks that appeared in the final scene. But the fun part was Sparrowhawke3D's Cloth Deformer. The following is an excerpt from the Sparrowhawke3D Cloth Deformer thread: "In preparation for the simulation, a group of proxy objects would be needed for collisions. Placing capsules and spheres and resizing and proportioning them a good representation of the real figure can be made. Each of these can then be parented to the real bones of the legs. They look a bit like muscles.

A conforming falloff zone would also be needed at the top of the legs where we don't want the cloth to move. Using a shader with alpha makes it easy to place this.

Now the Cloth Deformer can be added to the shorts mesh.
Switching to the Falloff tab the Conform Zone sphere can be selected. Turning on the Show Weights makes it easier to see the results and how in the zone from the

center to the edges there is a transition from black to white. Adjusting the Center and Falloff values change that transition to be harsher or smoother.

Switching to the Collisions tab the list of proxy body parts can be selected with the dialog. The simulator can then be put into Fast Primitives mode which gets the best results with figures.

Now we can adjust the main params. Most important is the Progress slider and that we set it to 0% at the start and 100% at the end. This is the only way to get a Deformer to animate. If we increase the Crease Resistance to 90% or higher and the Flexibility to 1-2% it will probably get better results and make the cloth appear to be a bit smoother. Shorts made from nylon might want to have a few more creases or use a more detailed mesh.

And now we can run the simulation. Without self collisions this will take about 20-30 minutes at this level of detail on an older machine..."

With the addition of Cloth Deformer, the animation looks far more convincing than without dynamic cloth.
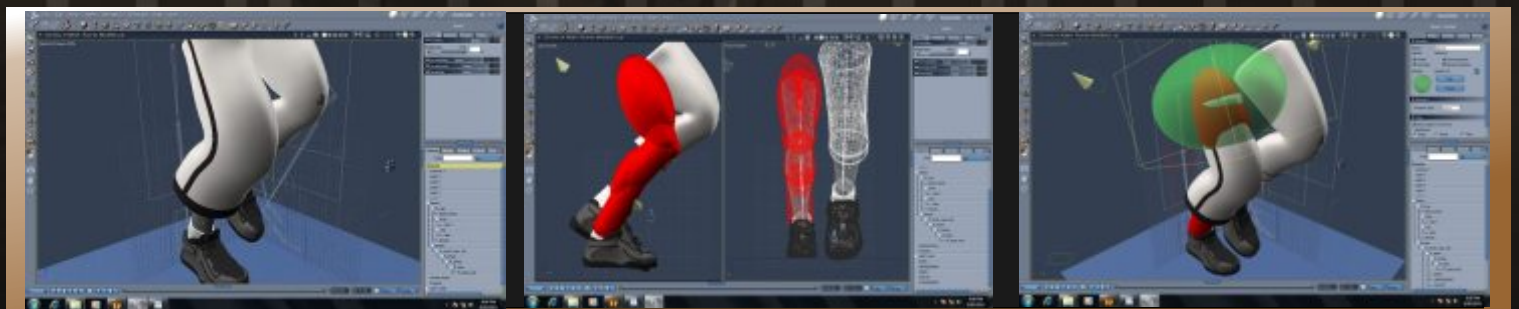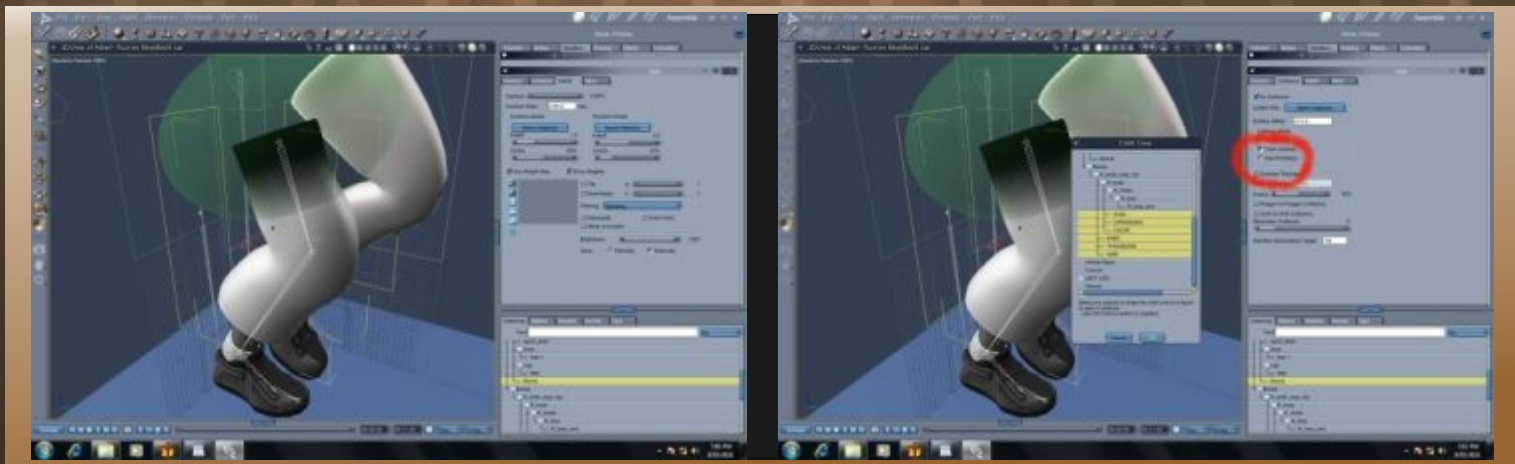
Finally, we have a character. It is time to talk about the environment. Carrara has incredibly well made tools for environment generation. But what to do when you don't have up to date hardware to take proper advantage of Carrara's outstanding tools? Well, there are many great tricks that Carrara can offer. The first thing to consider is, do you really need Global Illumination? Very great effects can be achieved by editing Ambient Light in the scene tab and use shaders with the Edge fall off plug-in.

The most amazing discovery I made with Carrara had to do with the plant generator. Thanks to Sub7th I had a chance to drop my jaw to the floor. Carrara has a really great and helpful community. In addition to the great help by Sparrowhawke3D, Sub7th helped me with grass and some other weeds by sharing and showing some of his plants. I never imagined Carrara's plant editor could do so much! In the hands of dedicated users Carrara can perform amazing tasks.
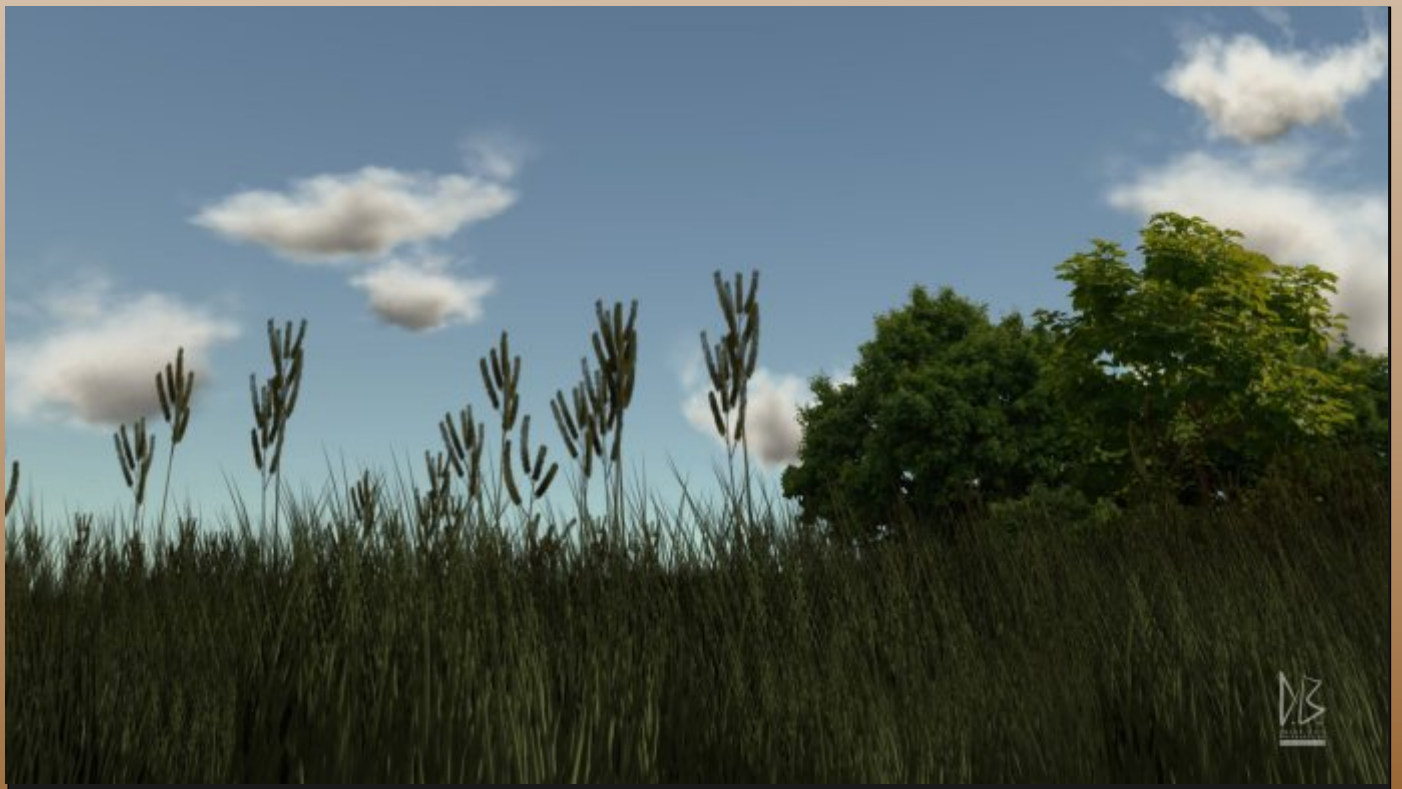
The scene pictured above shows a dense 3D nature scene that would be almost impossible to put together on my limited hardware. Thanks to Sub7th I was able to create this dense scene on my computer without maxing out my resources. Using rotoscoping techniques and making use of Carrara's replicators made the above image possible. Working in layers can save you a lot of time. This is why it is really useful to have a storyboard, so you know when you need to take short cuts. The nature scenes in this project don't use dolly cameras. We only pan to the right and zoom in and out. These limited camera movements allow me to use 2D layers and replicators to great effect.

Here is what I did. With the permission from Sub7th, I took his plants and modified them to suit the environment I wanted to create. The first plant was grass. I adjusted the grass according to my needs and applied my own shaders, then I duplicated the grass and assembled it to form a tall grass pond. I added some lights and changed some scene settings to complement the grass and rendered slightly waving grass into a PNG image sequence with transparency.   I did the same to the other plants. And yes, the plant below on the right is generated with Carrara's Plant Generator.

I also wanted the scene to include nice volumetric clouds, but they can add a lot to rendering time and require subtle set up of lighting in the scene. I thought, why bother with the

volumetric clouds in the scene when they do not do anything except fill in the background? I still needed them to appear to be floating in the sky in the scene. I decided to render the clouds in a separate scene as a PNG with transparency.

Once I had all the components prepared, all I had to do was to assemble them into one scene. For the scene to work perfectly, I needed to set up a realistic sky. I used one of the presets available in Carrara and adjusted the time of day. In addition to the sky, I used a gradient background in the scene. When you combine a realistic sky with the scene background you can achieve really nice effects. They both interact and the sky acts as an overlay to the background. I then added a modified terrain. In nature, ground is rarely perfectly flat. Using a gently bumped terrain seemed a good way to give the grass more variation. I created several planes to which I applied my rendered plants image sequences as texture maps. Even though this is a very basic and simple technique, it was not without problems. I had some issues with artifacts in some areas of the planes. I found that even if the texture is not tiled it is a good idea to check seamless in the texture options. This might help you remove artifacts in texture maps with transparency. You may also find it useful to disable receive shadow on some planes. This is what I did for the objects in the background. For rotoscoping to work well, I found that to have some glow of the textures might be a really good addition in most of the cases. Here you must be subtle. For example, in my scene the clouds have glow texture map set up to 80% brightness while for the trees in the background texture map in the glow channel was set up to 20% brightness and grass has only 5% brightness.

All the rest is the magic of the Surface Replicator. This way instead of having to render for a long time, to render 7 seconds long video clip in full HD (30FPS) took only 47 minutes.
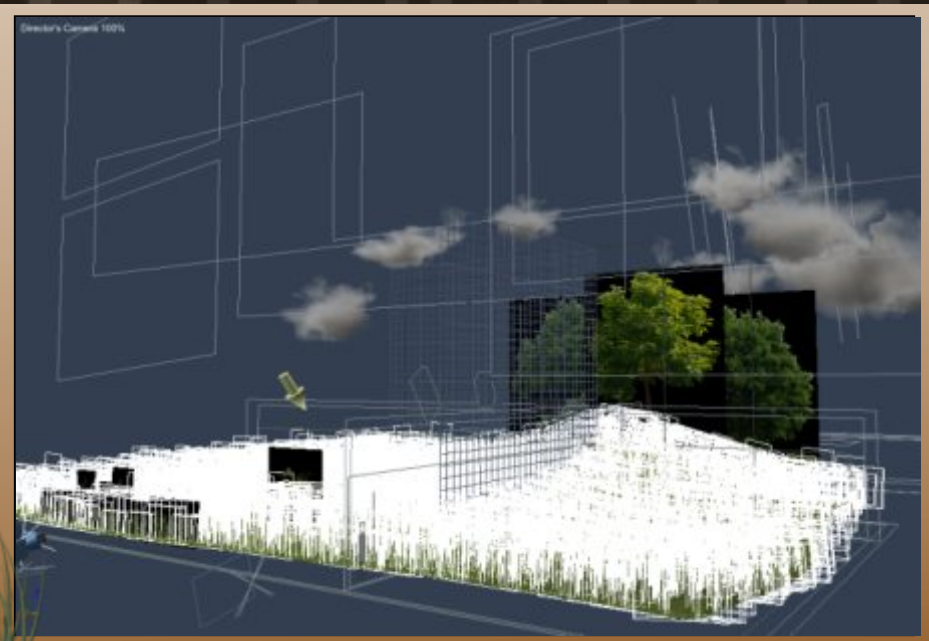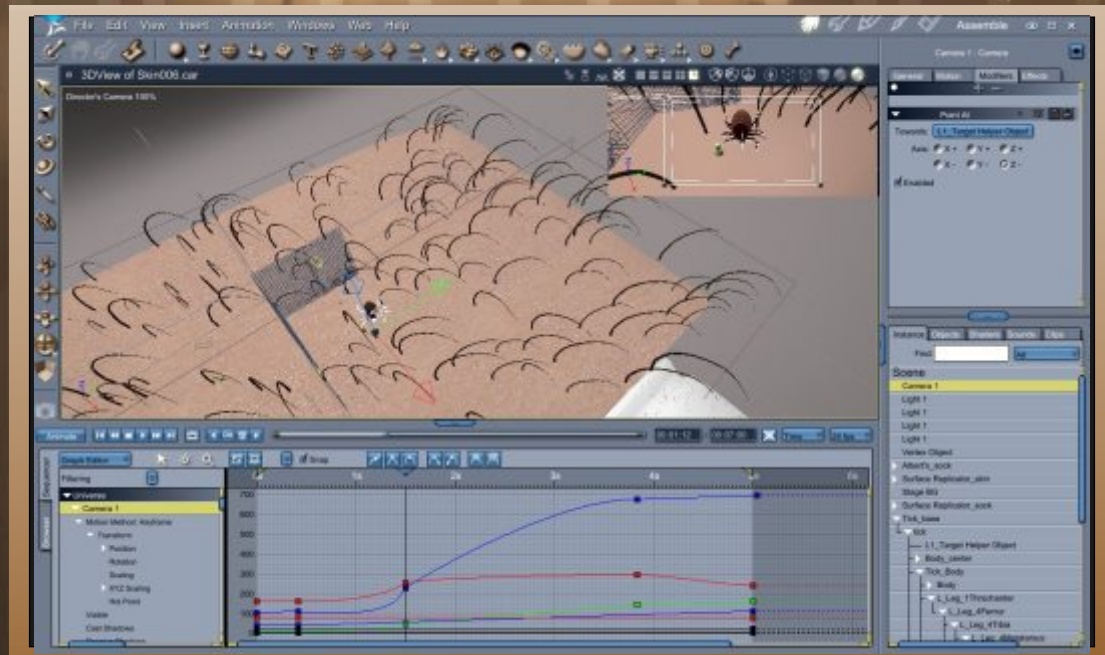
Once I finished animating and rendering, the final retouch was made using the Blender 2.5 Compositor. I rendered image sequences in two different parts, one was a final render and another one was Z Depth. I used Blender 2.5 as a compositing and color grading tool to combine the two outputs of each rendered scene into one composition. I was very impressed with Blender's features for post-production. I especially like the DOF that can be made in Blender. I even found it to be slightly better than in many dedicated post-production tools. I also did some slight color grading and added a vignette effect using Blender 2.5.
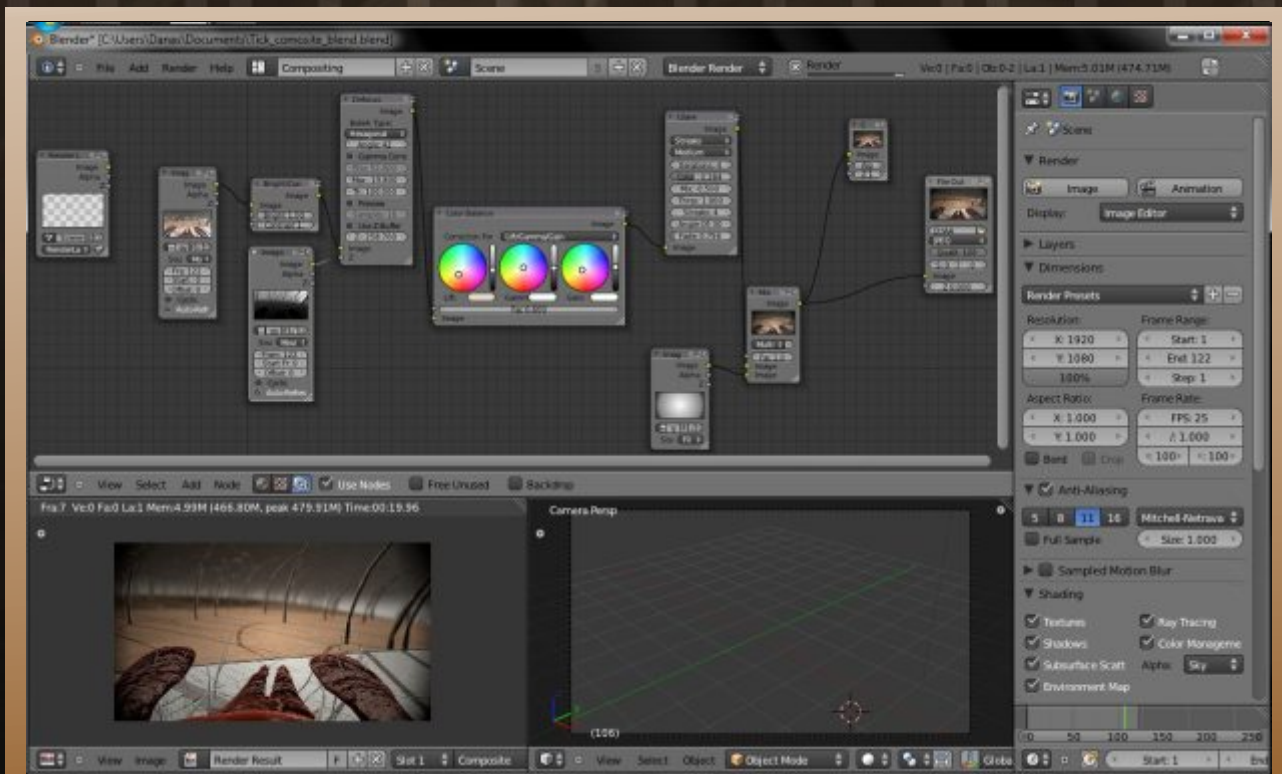
And here I end my short story. I hope you found something useful for your project. Remember, a good storyboard is the key to a tight, economical workflow and a professional final product. If you are going to go to the tall grass fields - think twice before you do so.
Best regards,
Danas

Gallery

Jeffrey Fett 2011

www.kemalandsheila.com

5th Element

Vintage Camera

AKULLA3D

sour milk

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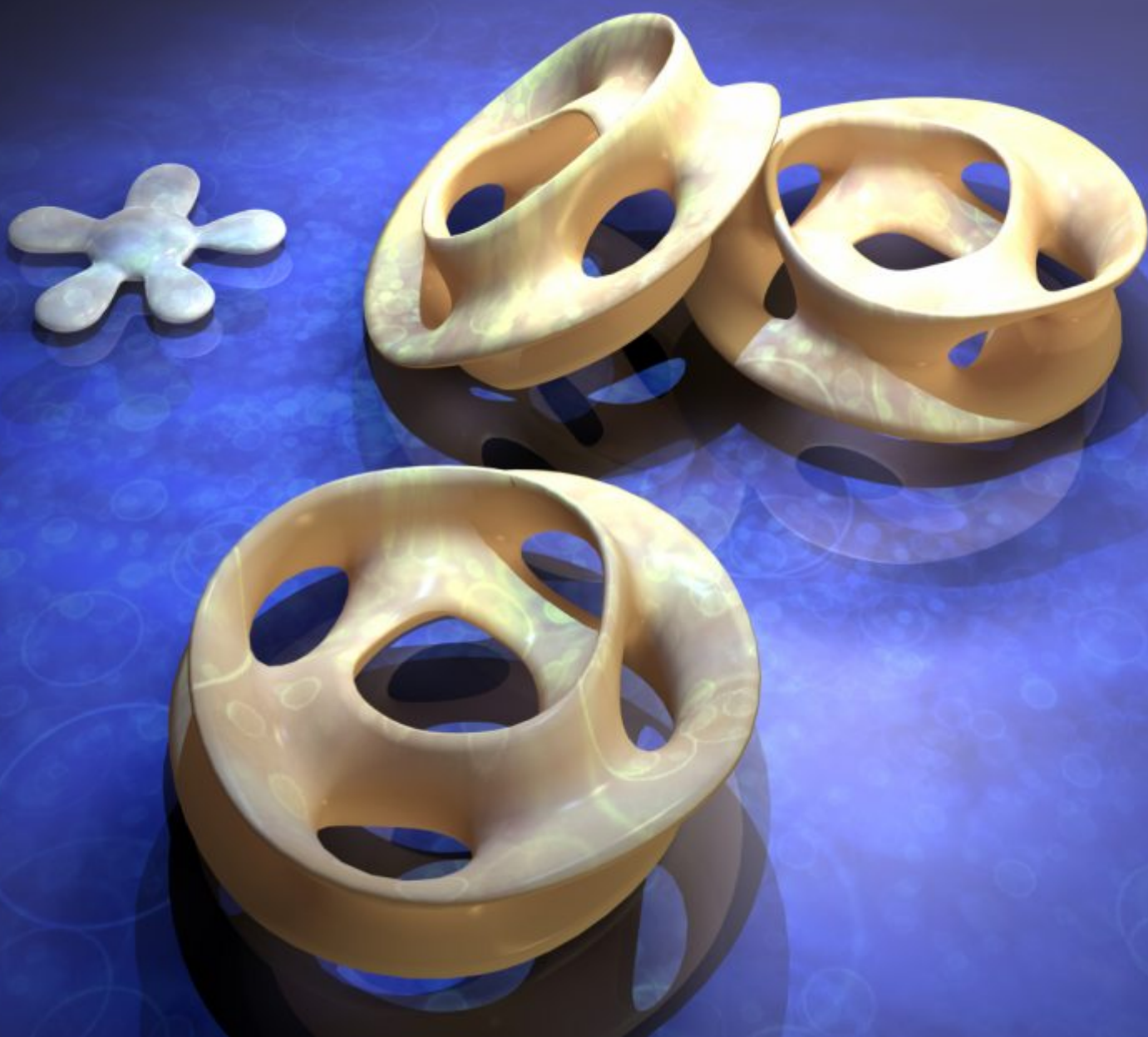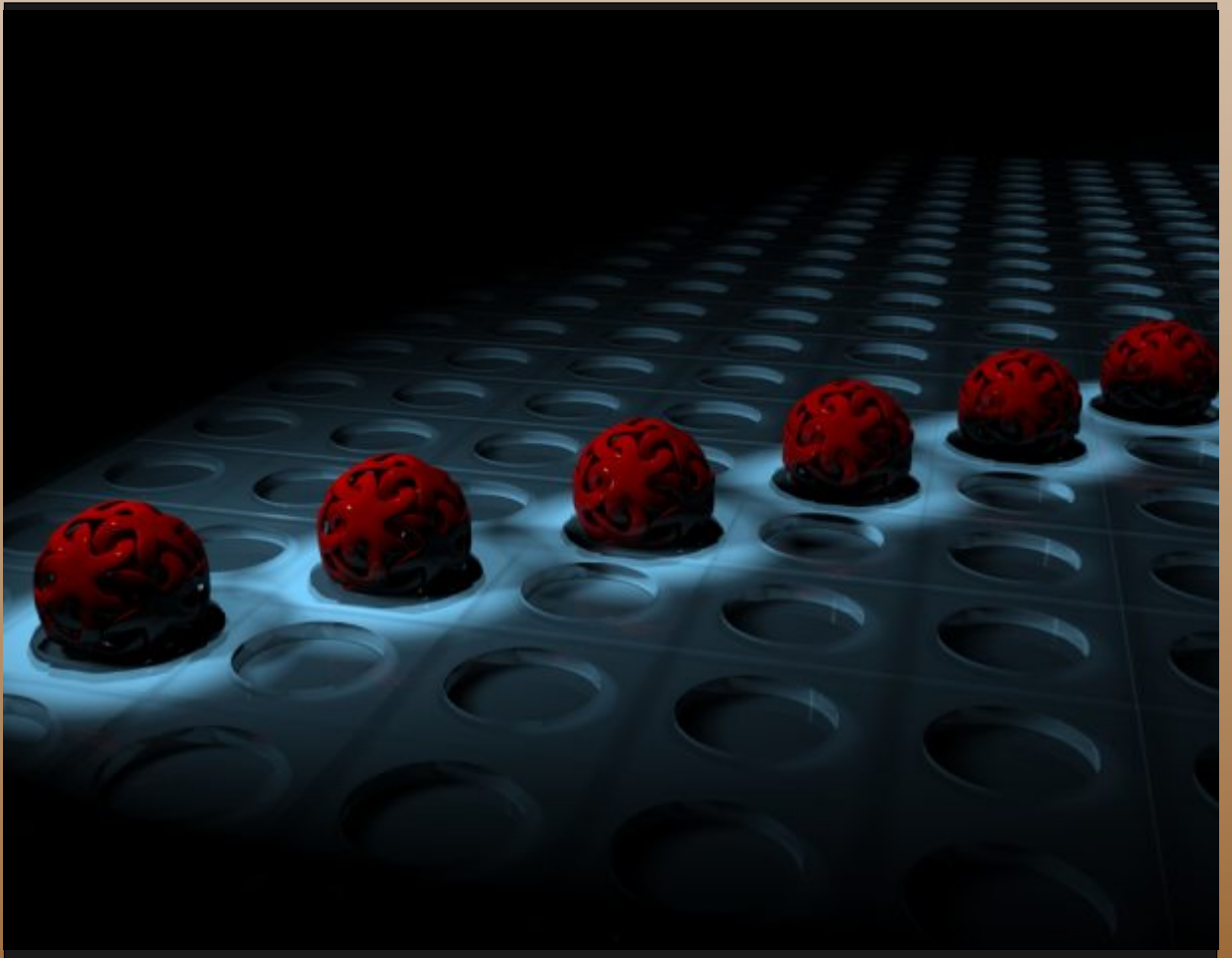
Terrible Tribel Terror

MARDI GRAS 2011

mardi gras

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yellow boot memoirs primo

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Moonlight

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"BOYS CATCHING FLIES"

Dale Hardman

Dale Hardman
©2011

Iceland Escape

Ian Bennett

A quiet sunday at work

Elianeck

I am back

Impossible passion 300

ELIANECK
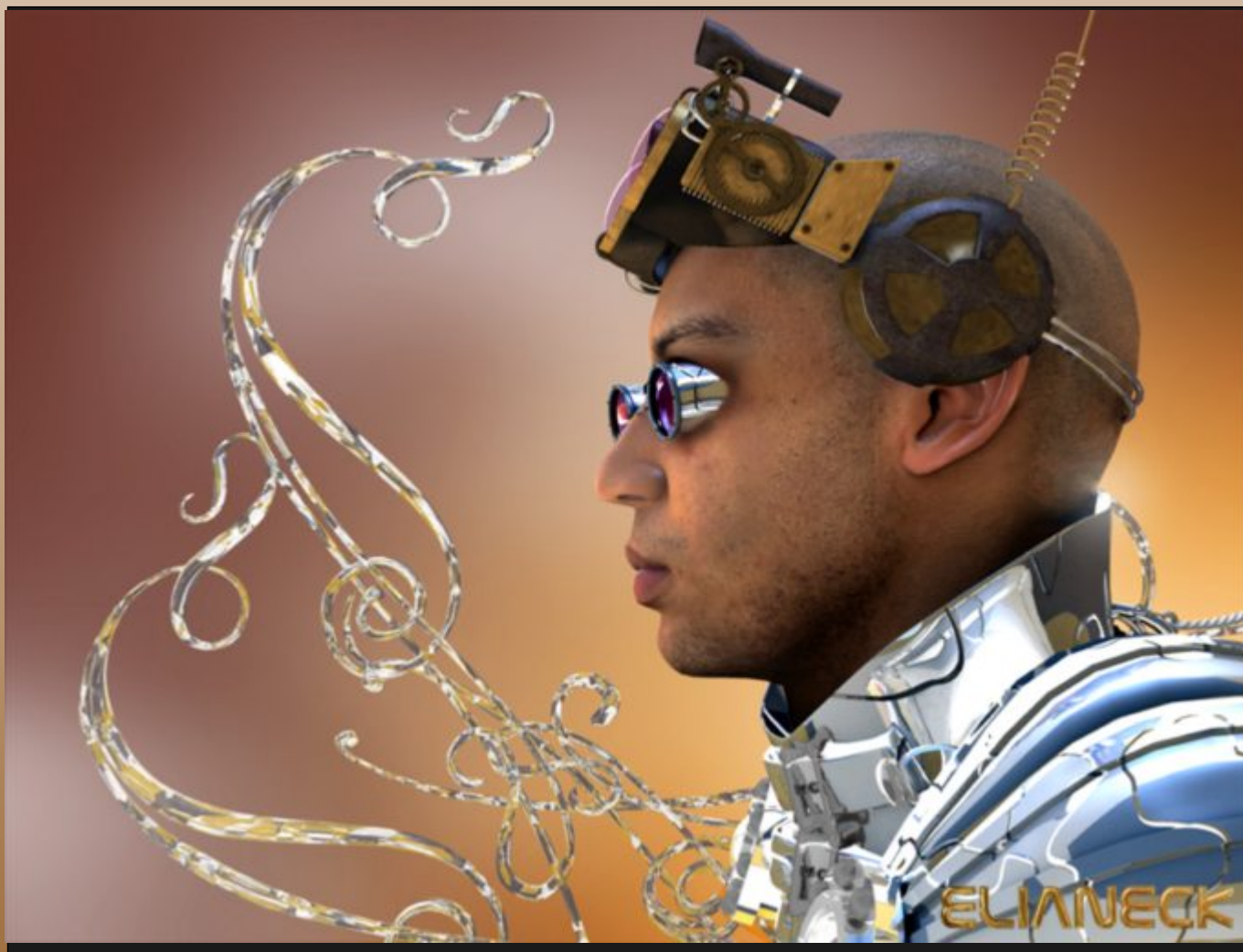
Dude

Tim Payne

Pavilion

Troopers

Swashbucklers

Zombies

Stu Sutcliffe

Plane and BHV

Mime

BHV

3D Lust
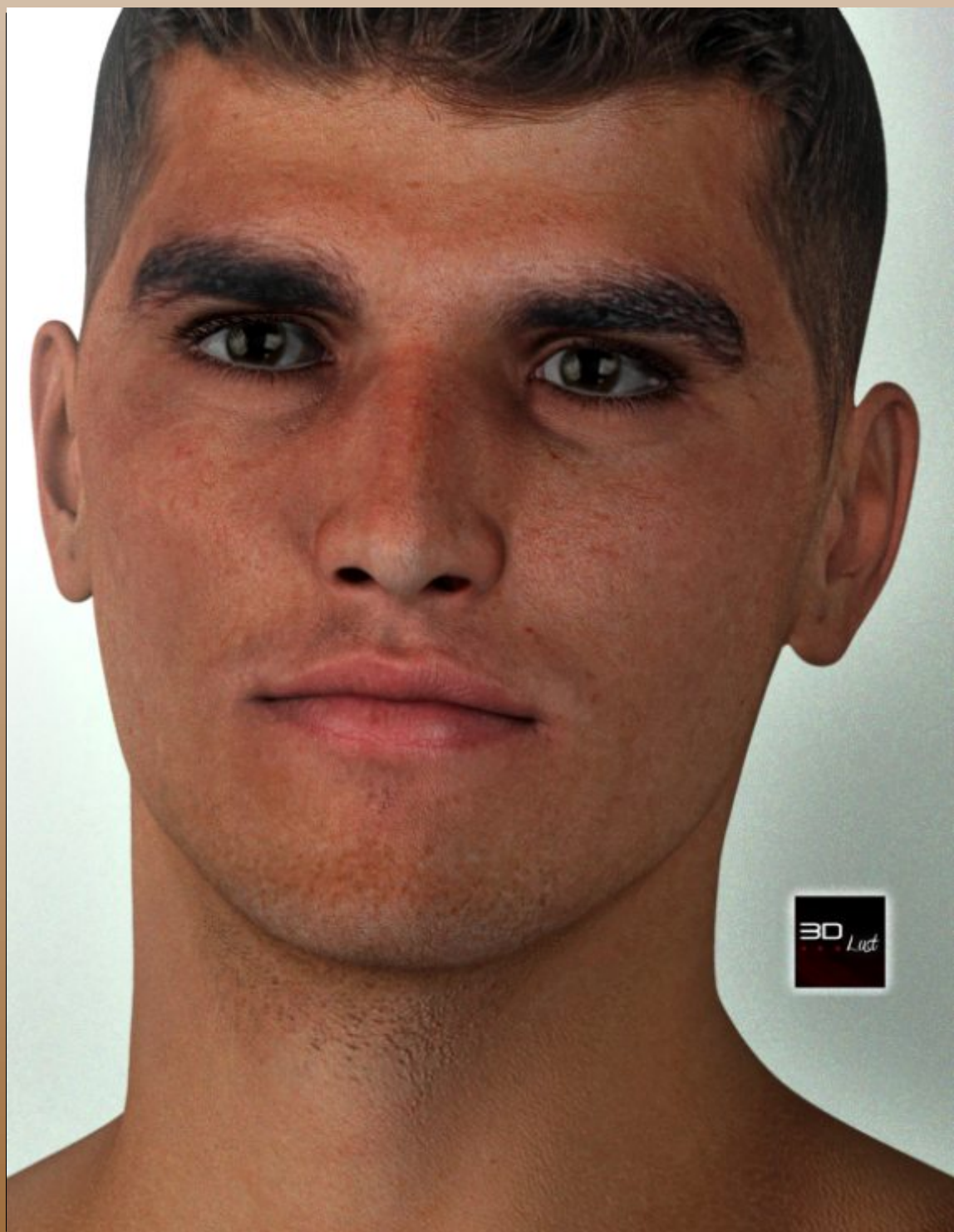
Buddy

quad2

Dimension Theory

A.K.A. *Jeffrey Felt 2011*

Mechanical
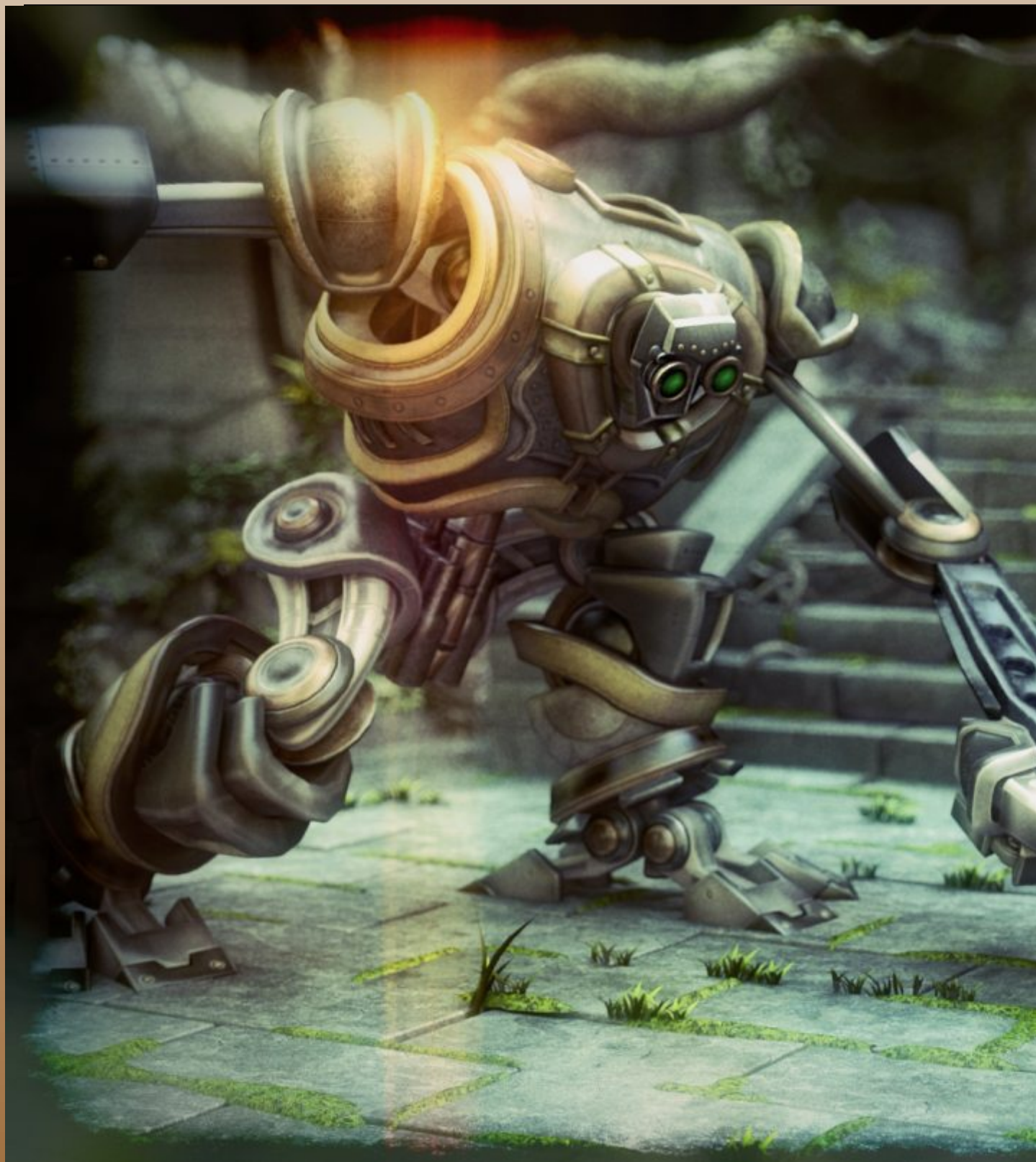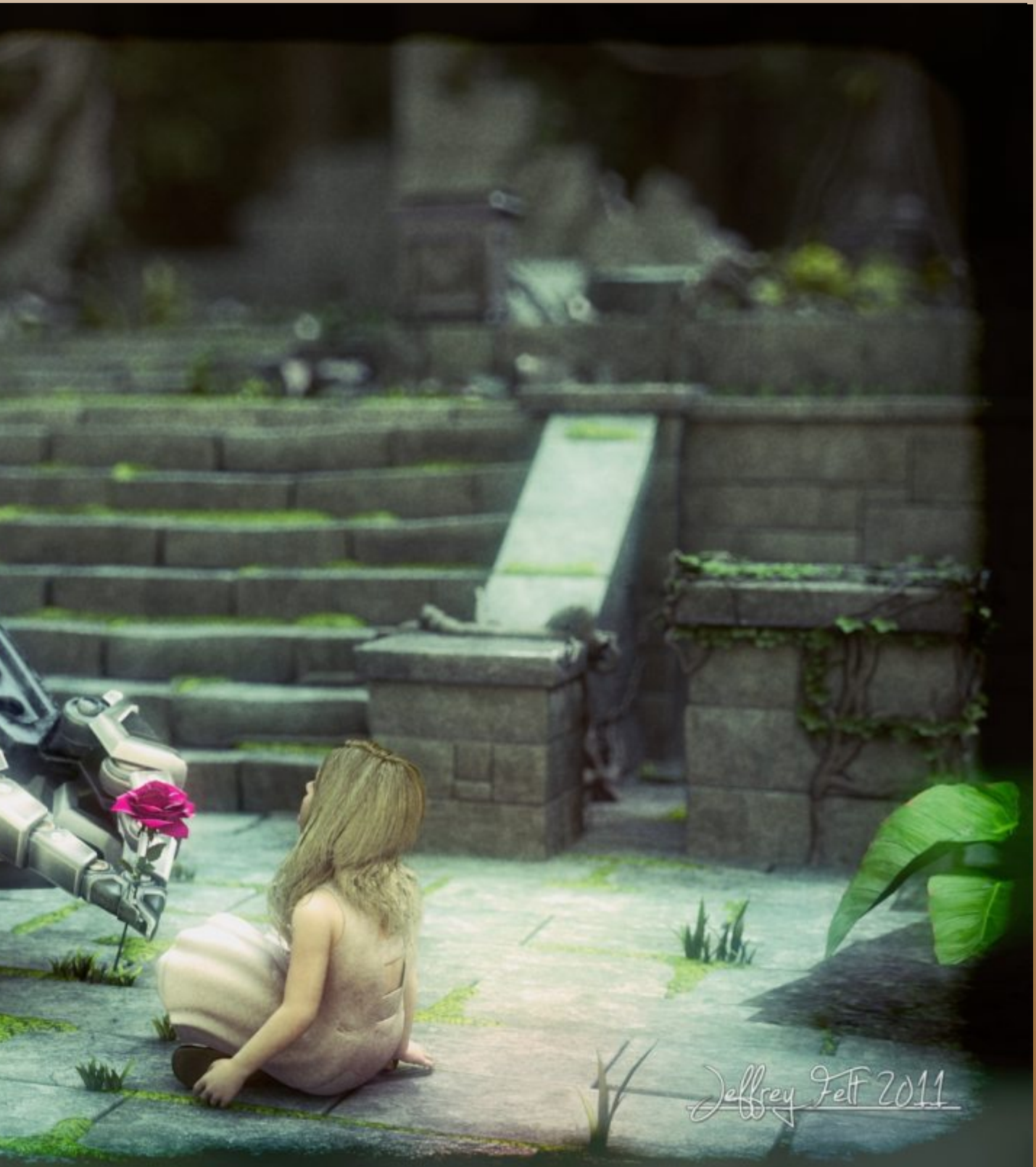
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The Iron Heart

Verona

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William

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Carrara render
www.daz3d.com

Harmonic

Winter Wonder

Py Cl

New genesis of particles for Carrara

By Frederic Rible

http://www.f1oat.org/pycloid/

A new place for Carrara artist.
Carrara Café is a project by DAZ 3D dedicated to Carrara users to have one place to find everything about Carrara and have a closer connection to the developers of Carrara. Brought to you by DAZ 3D, Marcelo Teixeira and Carrara 3D Expo magazine.

C3DE

Carrara 3D Expo

Dear Carrara 3D Expo Magazine readers, viewers and Carrara users,
We are looking for all kinds of material related to Carrara and Carrara users. Please do not hesitate to share your stories about Carrara related projects, share your knowledge and show your magnificent art!

We welcome you to be a part of
Carrara 3D Expo Magazine. Together we can make a difference, together we can make Carrara shine.
Big thank you to all Carrara 3D Expo artists and contributors!
Sincerely,
C3DE Magazine Team

C3DE

Carrara 3D Expo

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Thank you to all who support
Carrara 3D Expo!

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