



Autodesk salutes the 2014 VES award winners

Talent and craft shine at this
year's ceremony

Autodesk was proud to sponsor the recent 12th Annual VES Awards, recognizing the year's most outstanding achievements in the fields of visual special effects, CG graphics, and animation. The winners ran the gamut from major industry players to the smaller independent shops, along with submissions to the ever-popular Outstanding Visual Effects in a Student Project category.

We congratulate this year's VES award winners and nominees for their outstanding work and for advancing the art of 3D graphics, animation, and compositing. It's their dedication to expanding the realm of possibilities that inspires us to create even better and more powerful tools for our customers everywhere to practice their art and hone their craft. And we salute the talent and creativity of our entire user community, whether or not you've ever been nominated for, or won, an award. Without artists like you, our software would just be a lot of ones and zeros! With you, we get to see ideas realized and dreams fulfilled.



Image courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures and Framestore

Big features win multiple awards

The blockbuster feature film *Gravity* was one of the biggest success stories at this year's VES, with wins in several categories: Outstanding Visual Effects, Outstanding Models, Outstanding Compositing, and Outstanding Virtual Cinematography. London-based studio Framestore created the magnificent CGI effects that seem to launch movie-goers into space right along with the characters.

Equally showered with accolades was *Frozen*, from Walt Disney Animation Studios, which took home VES Awards for Outstanding Animation, Outstanding Animated Character, and Outstanding Created Environment in an Animated Film; and Outstanding FX and Simulation Animation in a Commercial Broadcast Program. The Disney animation team managed to simulate types of snow ranging from dense banks to the most subtle flurries.

Excellence in broadcast television and commercials

Spin VFX of Toronto, Ontario, Canada won two VES awards for their work in *The Climb* episode of the smash HBO series *Game of Thrones*. The spectacular CGI-generated world created by Spin VFX artists was a winner in the categories of Outstanding Created Environment in a Commercial or Broadcast Program and Outstanding Compositing in a Broadcast Program. Spin VFX supervisor Doug Campbell and supervising producer Luke Groves led the Spin VFX team to deliver over 200 shots for the third season of *Game of Thrones*. Spin VFX was also a nominee in the Outstanding Supporting Visuals in a Broadcast Program category for its work on *The Borgias*, a popular series that ran for three seasons on Showtime/Bravo.



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Among the nominated commercials was *Sensations*, a spot for Mercedes Benz with effects and compositing by Mikros Image, a French post-production and visual effects company based in Paris. The Mikros design team carefully honed their work to drive a powerful visual narrative, while balancing the challenge of creating effects that don't immediately register with viewers as obvious effects. "Autodesk tools are completely integrated into our pipeline and offer a high level of interoperability," explained Laurent Creusot, VFX supervisor and Flame artist. "As a result they formed the core of our production: we used Autodesk® Lustre® for color grading; Autodesk® Flame® for visual effects and finishing; and Autodesk® Maya® software for our 3D animation work and for creating all the fluid and particle effects."

Authentic artistry makes a moving appeal

98% Human, a 30-second public service announcement for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) featuring CGI animation produced by the famed effects studio The Mill, won VES awards for Outstanding Visual Effects in a Commercial, Outstanding Animated Character in a Commercial or Broadcast Program, and Outstanding FX and Simulation Animation in a Commercial or Broadcast Program. The spot is a moving plea to stop the use and abuse of great apes as actors in films, and features scenes of a despondent chimpanzee. The chimp, often seen in close-up, appears entirely real in every way—but it's not—it's actually 100% CGI. In *98% Human* CGI is taken to the level where a graphically created animal is indistinguishable from its flesh-and-blood counterpart.



Mercedes Benz Sensations, image courtesy of Mikros Image

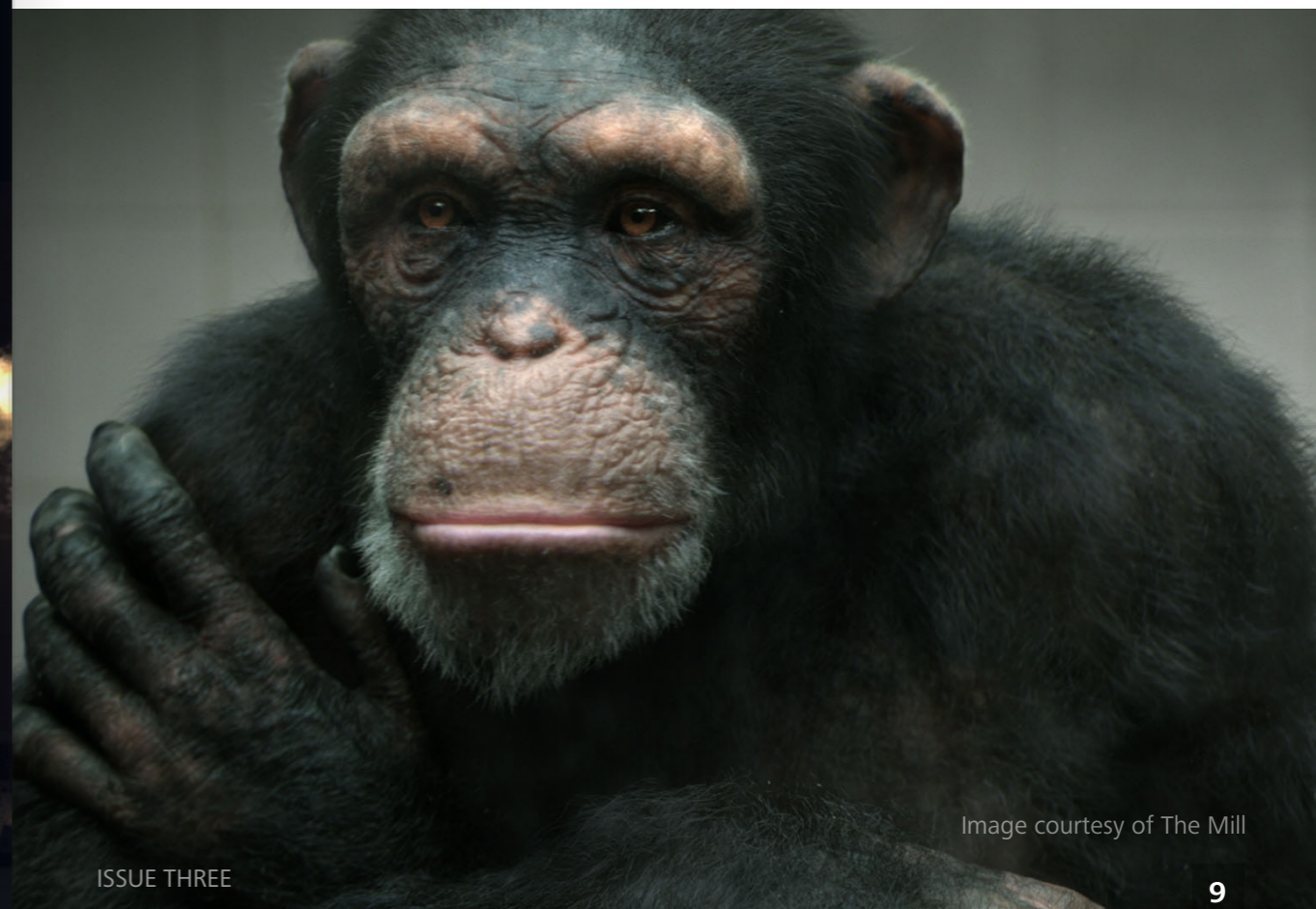


Image courtesy of The Mill



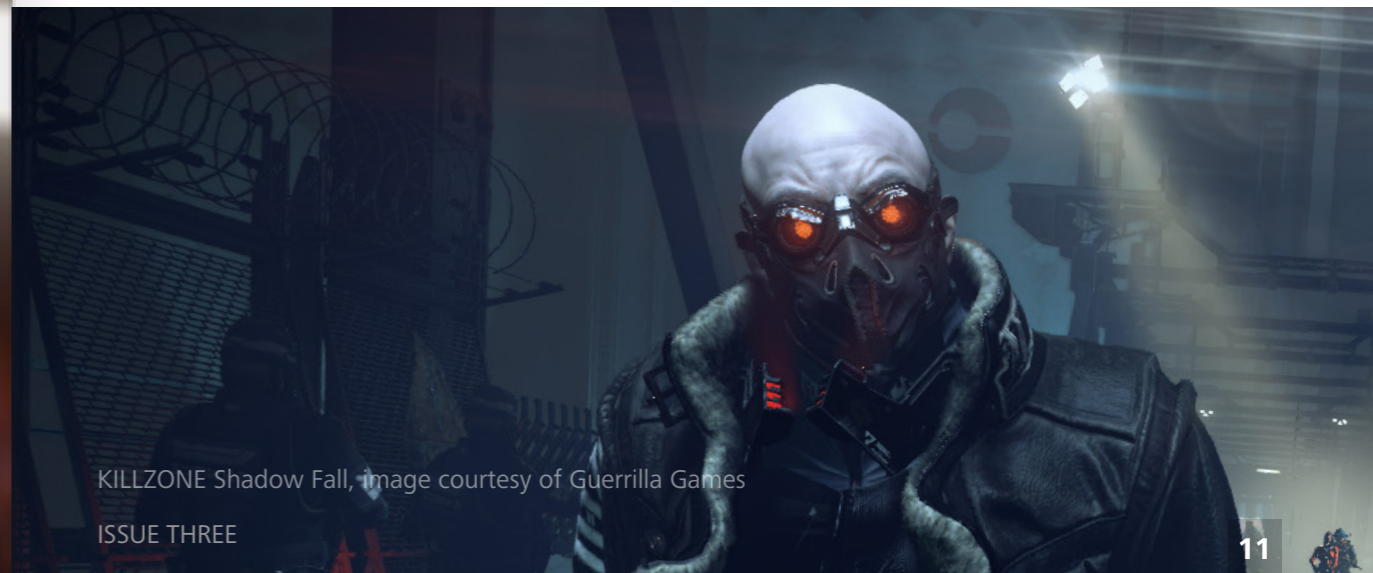
The next generation of Killzone

Nominated in the Outstanding Real-time Visuals in the Video Game category, the new *Killzone Shadow Fall* for Sony PlayStation® 4 by Guerrilla Games is the latest release in the company's hugely popular *Killzone* series. Founded in 2000 and acquired by Sony Computer Entertainment in 2005, Guerrilla is a growing studio with an established reputation as one of Europe's leading game development companies.

KILLZONE Shadow Fall, image courtesy of Guerrilla Games

In this latest version of *Killzone*, tensions are high and a war can spark at any moment. In the midst of this gripping scenario stands a Shadow Marshall, the most formidable member of the Special Forces, tasked with maintaining the delicate balance of power. Players enthralled with the *Killzone* universe can thank not only the amazing talents of Guerrilla's artists and animators for the game's unique thrills, but the special capabilities of the software tools that the creative team uses so well, most notably Autodesk Maya.

"Thanks to Maya software's open structure we've been able to integrate it very deeply into our pipeline and it has become central to our production," said Misja Baas, Guerrilla's Art Director on *Killzone Shadow Fall*. He elaborated: "We develop our own plug-ins for Maya so we can do almost everything in it: from creating individual assets, to building complete levels. We create complex, physically-based shaders in real time and we even create our level design waypoints in Maya. This single package approach means it's very easy to move content between the level design and art departments, and you get instant feedback. Maya helps us keep iteration times down and our production process flexible."



KILLZONE Shadow Fall, image courtesy of Guerrilla Games



Image courtesy of Unit Image

Trailer builds on game's excitement

The trailer for the forthcoming video game: *The Crew*, developed by Ivory Tower and Ubisoft Reflections and published by Ubisoft, was a VES Winner in the category of Outstanding Virtual Cinematography in a Live Action Commercial or Broadcast Program. The exciting two minute trailer was produced by the French 3D animation and visual effects company Unit Image.

The Crew is an MMO (Massively Multiplayer Online) and open-world video chase game where players race across America in powerful cars that they design and build. Missions can be undertaken alone, with friends, or with online co-op matchmaking. Players can form "crews" to race together or against ghost records.

In producing the trailer, the team at Unit Image juxtaposed two worlds highly valued by car racing enthusiasts: aesthetically pleasing advertising and supercharged action scenes. The game's distinctive features: its multi-player aspect, open-world freedom of movement, and the progressive arrival of other players into the action were all highlighted in the trailer's exciting gameplay depictions.

To create this visual intensity, the Unit Image team made extensive use of Autodesk® Mudbox® and Autodesk® 3ds Max® software. "Mudbox was ideal for rapidly painting car body scratches and smudges," commented Maxime Luère, VFX/CG Supervisor at Unit Image. For smudges, we also used Mudbox to create grayscale masks that were composed afterwards in Adobe® Photoshop®. 3ds Max is a powerful tool that enabled us to deal with massive scenes. For example, in the car hangar scenes there were about 40 million polygons used to create the hangar. Thanks to the Autodesk® MAXScript® scripting language, we were able to develop our own tools to improve our workflow. And we also benefited from all the available 3ds Max plug-ins that allowed us to render with V-Ray."



Image courtesy of Unit Image

Student winner *Rugbybugs* earns superlatives

In the special and always exciting category of Outstanding Visual Effects in a Student Project, the winner was *Rugbybugs*, an animated short created by Matthias Bäuerle, Fabian Fricke, Emanuel Fuchs, Martin Lapp, and Carl Schröter at the Filmakademie in Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

The goal of *Rugbybugs* was to showcase a fast-paced and visually exciting chase scenario in an unconventional setting, in this case, from a flying insect's point of view. "The 'bug-like' and very close-to-the-ground perspective helped a lot in achieving our vision," noted the *Rugbybugs* team. "I think that our mixture of CG characters and digitally-enhanced miniature sets gave us the edge over a very strong group of fellow nominees."

Image courtesy of Matthias Bäuerle, Fabian Fricke, Emanuel Fuchs, Martin Lapp, and Carl Schröter

Autodesk Maya and 3ds Max software were used by the student team to base-model the characters, with rigging done entirely in Maya. For texturing the animated creatures and environments, the team used the fast painting and projection toolset of Autodesk Mudbox. Last but not least, 3ds Max was again employed for creating particle effects. "Without Autodesk software," they mentioned, "this project would have been a lot harder to complete."

Autodesk has sponsored the Outstanding Visual Effects in a Student Project category for the last three years, and we're a big supporter of emerging creative talent. Once again we're delighted and amazed to see just how good these new artists, not only the winners but all of the nominees, have become, and we're eager to see their work as professionals.

