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Watership Down

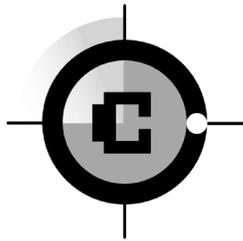
Hello Vincenzo and Gabriella,

A short while ago a team of key C.O.R.E. VFX, Toons, and RnD staff met to discuss the Watership Down project. I passed on all of the information, requirements, and concerns that I am aware of, as well as the concept art.

In order to create four hours of material in this particular style, we need to have a very efficient pipeline in place. During our meeting at Capri, we talked about the possibility of classical animation combined with CG texturing and compositing. There are two practical concerns with this approach. Firstly, it would require two completely different pipelines, which would drastically reduce efficiency. The second is that there is no efficient way to “attach” digital textures to classically animated characters. Hence we propose the following approach.

Animation

We fully understand the importance of capturing hand-drawn emotion and therefore have devised an innovative approach that would allow us to achieve it with one efficient pipeline. The plan is to use a combination of hand drawn faces, or key features, that are tracked onto 3D rabbits. The style of the 3D animation itself would break from typical 3D behavior to feel more like classical animation. A significant part of the feel will come from the animation direction.



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Additionally, we will employ techniques to reduce the smooth, perfection of CG movement and will animate to key poses drawn by an artist.

Texturing

The second part of the process is the texturing; we have the opportunity to implement some very innovative texturing techniques. We can render colours, not just brightness, to represent shadows and light. These coloured shadows and highlights will appear to be part of the texture, like a painting. We would use a combination of painterly textures attached to the model along with a more artist-controlled 2D stroke pass to help with shading, lighting and texture direction. These techniques will enable us to create a painterly look and feel, taking us even farther from the standard 3D animation style. The look could closely match the concept art, or any other style required.

The key points to achieve CG animation in an emotional, painterly, hand-drawn style are:

- appropriate animator controls
- drawing key features and attaching them to the 3D models
- a looser, less restrictive, animation style
- working to artist drawn poses

Using these techniques we are confident that we can achieve what you are envisioning for the budget that we have discussed.

Needless to say, we are all very excited about Watership Down. This will be an incredible project and we look forward to working with you again.

Best regards,

Bret (and all your friends at C.O.R.E.)