



TOPIX/MAD DOG AND VFX SUPERVISOR DENNIS BERARDI LAUNCH MR. X, A DIGITAL EFFECTS STUDIO FOR FEATURE- BASED ENTERTAINMENT

TORONTO, CANADA - January 19, 2001 - On January 15th VisualEffects Supervisor Dennis Berardi, and Chris Wallace and SylvainTaillon of Toronto-based TOPIX/Mad Dog, opened the doors at Mr. X,Inc., a studio providing computer generated visual effects forfeature-based entertainment.

This is an equal partnership with TOPIX, specialists in characteranimation, special effects, film titling, type and broadcast design,supplying the financing and technology; and Dennis Berardi, formerlyvisual effects supervisor of Toybox (Toronto, Vancouver and LosAngeles), supplying the ideas and directing the talent.

"More and more, directors are relying on digital content providersto help tell their stories. Mr. X can break down the important visualmoments of the script, offer design, pre-visualization, on-set vfxsupervision, high-end photo-real cgi and compositing. Our goal is to bethe first people on and the last people off a feature project -interacting with all the traditional film department heads along theway, explained Mr. X President/VFX Supervisor Berardi. "

The birth of Mr. X comes at a significant time as the integrationof traditional and digital filmmaking processes has become commonplace."We are providing filmmakers with the digital images they need. Acompany that communicates and bridges the gap between digitaltechnology and creativity, as well as production designers,cinematographers, directors and the digital postproduction process, isgoing to be very well positioned," continued Berardi.

Berardi brings a truly remarkable set of skills to this newventure. In the last three years alone he was Visual EffectsSupervisor/Producer or Manager on films including The Cell, Fight Club,eXistenZ, Keeping the Faith, Superstar, Thomas and the Magic Railroad,Jason X and Bride of Chucky. Earlier in his career, Berardi worked onfeatures and television programs including The Sweet Hereafter, Cube,The Planet of Junior Brown, Mimic, Fly Away Home and The Hunchback.

Mr. Xs forte is photo-realistic cg, matte painting, vfxcompositing and film or HD resolution postproduction. The artist drivenstudio is equipped with a rare mix of technical and creativeindividuals who possess expert knowledge of the latest imagingtechnology and are intent on pushing the limits and making theimpossible possible in the digital realm.

"Developing talent is crucial. We can buy hardware, we can buy software, but "peopleware" is hard to come by. I want this company to be ideas-based, not necessarily technologies-based, and that has everything to do with the people and the creative process - create, encourage, stimulate," explained Berardi.

To stay tuned into the up and coming talent pool, Mr. X is in the process of partnering with schools including Sheridan College, Centennial Development Center, Vancouver Film School, CalArts, and the like. Berardi, in his off hours is teaching an advanced professional development program for filmmakers, a module on digital imaging and visual effects, at Sheridan College.

Software programmer and technical whiz Colin Withers has joined Mr. X as Studio Tools Developer. He was previously Technical Director at TOPIX, overseeing the day-to-day technical aspects of the studio, with responsibility for researching and developing custom studio software tools to aid in production of broadcast design, 3D animation and postproduction.

Some of these developments include fluid, rigid and soft body dynamics simulators (TOPIX_cloth), procedural VRML generators, animation flocking software, a 2D motion blur renderer, procedurally generated fur, and most recently, pixelated time slicing effects for use in postproduction. Rounding out the Mr. X team are flame* Artist Aaron Weintraub, VFX Compositor Marco Polsinelli, Digital Matte Artist/Animator Kristy Blackwell, Character Animator Brian Anderson, and Animators Sean Cohen, Shane Glading and Mark Stepanek.

"I have known Dennis for many years now. We met through work while he was in the digital imaging business, and quickly became close personal friends. I have always hoped of one day working with him as I had kept abreast of his great work over the years, and when the opportunity came along to found Mr. X together, it was a bit of a dream come true for me. And the great thing is, I knew the guy was good but seeing him in action... well, he is certainly the man for the job," stated Taillon.

"We have watched Dennis build up the Toybox business over the past few years and when the opportunity to partner with him presented itself, we jumped." We were able to provide Dennis with a financial and technical framework for his business and help fill some of the crucial creative and technical positions - Aaron Weintraub, Marco Posinelli and Colin Withers are all TOPIX/MadDog transplants. And we are able to house him close to our operations so that the ensuing result is that we both get bigger and better, a natural fit!," added Chris Wallace.

Mr. X has just completed its first project - digital effects compositing and on-set vfx supervision for six sequences for Century Hotel, a Victorious Films (Toronto) feature scheduled for release September 2001 at the Toronto International Film Festival. Shot in Toronto, the film, directed by David Weaver and produced by Victoria Hirst, tells seven stories, each played out over the course of the 20th century in a downtown hotel.

For additional information or to see a reel contact Mr. X, Inc.,35 McCaul Street, Suite 303, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T IV7; phone(416) 595-6222; fax (416) 595-9122; or visit the Mr. X web site at www.mrxfx.com