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“Baby Moana” - Moana

The shoreline was a particular challenge on this show. Getting the proper transition between water, wet sand and beach was important in making the shot feel real. This sequence was one of the first times we worked on Moana’s parents in production so there was extra consideration making sure they looked perfect. Getting the moment between Moana and her mom to feel intimate and cheerful was important to the directors.

“The Next Chief” - Moana

This montage sequence left a lot of room for unique lighting. I developed the look of the character on the inside of the hut being lit only by the light from the rainy day outside. It was a nice chance to play with a softer lighting on the show. For the exterior shots, there were many green elements that were stacked on top of each other and it was important to have a clean read while still maintaining a feeling of lush and fresh vegetation.

“Parking Tickets” - Zootopia

These shots were a bridge between two sequences, both of which already had established looks. A seamless transition between the two lighting setups was required. On these shots it was important to get some pleasant shaping on the background buildings that were primarily in shadow.

“Peace Rally” - Zootopia

For Gazelle’s peace rally, I created the initial key and took the entire shot group to final composite. For this sequence, we wanted to use shadows to visually put characters in boxes and increase tension. This was the first shot with Gazelle lit for the movie so these shots were used to finalize her look. For the final shot of the series, I used the character motion to motivate a darkening of the light to emphasize the impact to Judy.

“Inspirational Talk” - Moana

One of the biggest technical challenges was getting a clean render of the shoreline behind the characters. Due to the length of the shots, it was impossible to get perfectly clean renders so multiple techniques were used in Nuke to remove artifacts but maintain the motion in the waves. It was a nice chance to work on another intimate moment between Moana and her mom.

“Set Sail” - Moana

For these open ocean shots, maintaining consistency to the look of the water throughout the shots was a challenge. Especially on Hei Hei’s reaction shot where we saw the water both close up and at a far distance in the same shot. This required some blending between lighting values to maintain a consistent feel in the wide angle without over exposing the reflections in the closeup. The chance to work on one of the wide shots of the ocean and comedy beat in the movie was exciting.

“The Climb” - Moana

The Climb was an interesting sequence as many of the shots were top down. The focus was to try to add a sense of depth to the shot while still getting a nice framing from the side angled light. I was able to add additional 2.5D clouds in a few shots in Nuke to add emphasis to the height in the shots.

“Training Session” - Moana

This was a quick sequence during the final weeks of the show where I picked up from an established key. It was fun to get a chance to light Maui’s hawk and transformation flying through the scene. The mix of the low warm sunrise light and atmosphere gave a beautiful look to the scene.

Alice : Through the Looking Glass

On this show I was only responsible for the lightings. The separate compositing department handled the final color. For the wide rusting castle, I was responsible for lighting the rust to match a painted set extension. This was my first experience with Katana/Arnold.

“Bot Fight” - Big Hero 6

For this sequence, the goal was to have a near photo-real feeling while highlighting the actions of the characters. The read of the scene was simplified by using primarily rim lighting on the crowd. This combined with the use of lens flares and haze left the action easy to read while maintaining the feeling of a crowded fight.

Feast

For this short, much of the look was created through complex Nuke scripts. Data passes such as normals, reference space, and world space were used to achieve a multitude of effects. 3D projection mapping was used to simulate shadowing and highlights. The house floor reflections were particularly challenging as they had to be accurate to the final look of the characters that was heavily adjusted in Nuke which was accomplished with a 3D camera in Nuke with projected characters. The final effect was a unique blend between 3d lighting and 2d art.

“Burgess Showdown” - Rise of the Guardians

The Sandman and all his props were designed to emit low levels of light. This was accomplished by adjusting the particles provided by fx into a PGBI point cloud. This allowed us to separate out the brightness of the visible particles from the light they provided helping to sell the magic feel. I developed and distributed a fix to Jack Frost's hairline that was caused by the PBGI algorithm. This was used for the remainder of the show.

“Attack on Elsa” - Frozen

I developed the look for the lighting of FX ice created by Elsa throughout the fight. To increase the feeling of danger, I proposed and implemented an adjustment to the arrow to prevent sending the shot back to animation. Several compositing methods were used in these shots to decrease the noise in the ice palace including 3d projection and frame blending. The refractive ice was a particular challenge.

“Mr. Big & Subway Chase” - Zootopia

During the production, I was able to help out with a few shots on some sequences. The sequences at Mr. Big was a fun set of shots that showcased the scale of the characters in the scene. For the Subway Chase, I picked up a few shots of the cabin during the underground portion. The main challenge on the shots was being able to read what was happening while maintaining believably in the lighting.

“Expo Hall” - Big Hero 6

I developed the look of both Krei and Callahan for this sequence. A main focus was to balance the overhead lighting and the self-illuminated displays. With the long render time for the environment, much of the focus was on cleaning up and iterating in Nuke to not overload the farm.

“Hiro’s Bedroom” - Big Hero 6

This was one of the first sequences in Hiro’s area of his bedroom. I developed the look of Hiro within this space with the goal of a soft light on his face that was motivated by the desk lamp. The biggest challenge was to get some separation between Hiro’s hair, the back chair and the monitor.

“Jamie’s Bedroom” - Rise of the Guardians

This sequence was originally used as an early development sequence. Midway through production, the sequence was redesigned for addition to the final movie. I was responsible for taking over a majority of the sequence from the lead’s early setup and making it fit the new look of the show. The focus was on feeling like the scene was lit solely by moonlight coming in through the window.

“Love is an Open Door (Balcony)” - Frozen

I worked to match the initial lighting key for a wide shot of the balcony and interpret it for the surrounding areas. The focus was to get a soft warm light from the interior to mix nicely with the cool moon light. It was important to feel the transition when the door gets close while maintaining the romantic lighting.

“Love is an Open Door (Waterfall)” - Frozen

After an initial environment setup, I developed the look further to make it feel more romantic. Fake caustics were added to the scene through a projection light. A wet mask was added to the rocks and the material adjusted to make them feel soaked by the waterfall. For one shot, the rendered FX simulation needed to be adjusted in Nuke to prevent the characters from appearing to walk through the falling water.

“End Credits” - Zootopia

The end credits sequence in Zootopia came into lighting in the last weeks of production. Due to the limited time constraints and budget, it was important to light the background characters in a way to save as much time for upstream departments. In this shot, I was able to use a method to remove the grass elements from under characters’ feet to prevent the need for interaction. Camera flashes were added to give it more of a concert atmosphere.