IN THE
SPOTLIGHT

AJDIN DURAKOVIC

e-on
Software

Ajdin Durakovic is a director of photographic and computer graphics generalist currently working as a senior generalist in Grid-VFX studio. His most recent project includes *Bilal,* the first full CG movie in the Middle East. Check out what he has to say about his experience using VUE to create 3D CG environments.

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e-on: What is your background?

Ajdin Durakovic: I started my career 15 years ago in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. My first studio was InFine where we mostly focused on advertising for leading brands. Back then I was only using 3D Max and Mental Ray for rendering engines. As most of you know, in these industries, deadlines are really tight, and if you want to grow, you need to invest some effort, not only with quality but with speed as well. I found out that 3Ds Max is a great software, but if you want to meet all the deadlines, you need to learn other software to tackle challenges and tasks with more power. I started to learn a lot of new programs – one of which was VUE.

Today, I'm in the animation industry, which is a bit slower and stress free compared to the advertising industry. My biggest role on an animated movie was as the director of photography. The animated movie, *Bilal*, was the first animated movie created in the United Arab of Emirates (UAE), and it had great success over there. However, I have to say that all parts of the computer graphics (CG) industry bring something new and challenging. No matter which position I held, or what my daily tasks and routines were, I enjoyed every single one of them.

In the animation industry, my day begins by checking all my shots from previous days with quick crops from all the frames rendered on the farm. When everything is checked and fine, I start with new elements. As a generalist, my day can go in any direction. Sometimes I will work on lighting and setup to prepare your scene. Or, maybe that day I will be working on look dev and creating

I also used VUE for the CG environment in the African Global Business Forum and for cloud simulation for the Ministry of Culture – National Day Clouds TVC.

My biggest challenge with VUE software was finding the proper balance between render speed and output quality. Today there are many rendering options aside from VUE, but not all of them represent the real power of this software. To get the best production output you will have to spend some time tweaking materials as well as render and light settings.

The list of other software I use is quite long. As the main tool, I'm using Max and Maya, from there I'm spreading on whatever my tasks are. For modeling: Marvelous Designer, Speed Tree, and Sculpting. For the environment: Mudbox, Zbrush, e-on VUE, World Machine. For texturing and shading, I use Substance Painter, Mari, 3D Coat, Photoshop…and so on.

e: Do you have any advice to share?

AD: Be creative, always push your limits, and search for new tutorials and ideas. Our industry is changing every month. New technology is coming out so fast that you can't take a break from learning even if you think you already know enough.

I get most of my inspiration online, but sometimes it's enough to just take a walk through the park – breathing fresh air and enjoying nature's imperfections.

I would definitely recommend VUE to everybody. It's crazy how powerful this software is. You don't need hours and hours of training to use it. It's really easy going. You can express your creativity, and let VUE algorithms do the math for you.

It saved me so many times. Use it, and it will save you too. ⌁

Check out Adjin Durakovic's portfolio at:
http://adurakovic.com

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amazing textures and shades for objects that are already modeled. That's why I like working as a generalist. I have to continually learn to keep up with your steps and new software, but variations In my daily tasks are way more interesting than they would be if I was only a lighter, for example.

As I continue down this career path, it would be great to get new director of photography (DOP) roles in the industry or to do some art directing. It's important to invest in my skills and knowledge, because real opportunity will come, and I will have the chance to prove myself.

e: What is your experience with VUE?

AD: I have been using VUE for at least 12 years now. It's a great software that helps you boost your speed and achieve quality production in just a few clicks of the mouse. I use VUE for terrain and matte painting, but it's also a really powerful tool for cloud simulation or using the scattering tool. I have involved VUE in many professional projects. The most recent one was the animated movie, *Bilal*. I used it for matte painting, cloud simulation, sand dunes, and rock formations.

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