

THE CREATIVE EDGE IN COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

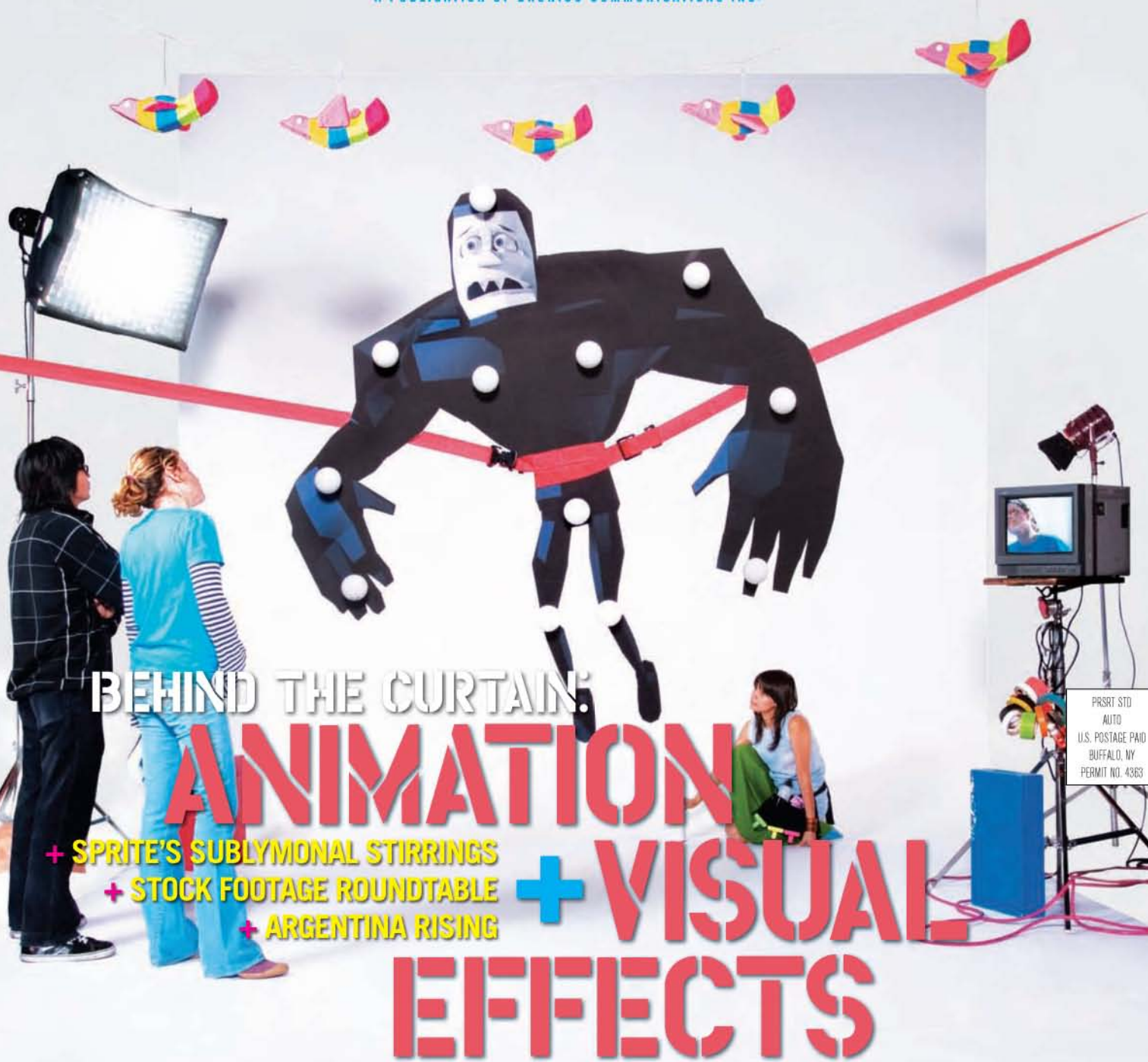
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BEHIND THE CURTAIN:

ANIMATION + VISUAL EFFECTS

- + SPRITE'S SUBLYMONAL STIRRINGS
- + STOCK FOOTAGE ROUNDTABLE
- + ARGENTINA RISING

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MOTION MASH MOGRAPH CHAIN LETTER HITS THE NET



BY BARRY WALSH

> The game of Exquisite Corpse, in which stories or images are assembled in haphazard fashion by various players with each adding to the end of the others' contributions, has its origins in the Surrealist movement of the '20s. Fitting, then, that motion graphics artist Bran Dougherty-Johnson (aka Grow Design Work) brought modern-day masters of the surreal – fellow mograph artists – into the playing field for his online version of Exquisite Corpse, the "Psst! Pass it on..." project. Resembling a motion graphics chain letter, "Psst!" is a collection of six one-minute films created by three teams each.

With the initial idea coming to Dougherty-Johnson via a dream, after discussing the notion with friends in the field, he formulated the shape the collaborative project should take, and what to avoid.

He references Photoshop Tennis, where artists would continually add to an image

Input from Aaron Stewart and Bran Dougherty-Johnson.

and pass it along. "It was essentially a battle, like rap freestyles that would just devolve into 'Your mother's ugly.' I didn't want this to turn into something like that – I wanted everyone to be into it."

Dougherty-Johnson sent invites to friends, colleagues and recommended artists, outlining the process and the project's mission – to have fun and collaborate on something unique and unfettered by commercial constraints. Each team would have three weeks to finish their part, with the next team in the chain getting a preview from the preceding team in the third week. "The first team might set the tone and then the next teams would riff off of it."

The list of contributors to the project reads like a who's-who of the motion world. Participants including Athletics, bubble&squeak's Jason Koxvold, Buck, Freestyle Collective, Aaron Stewart of Hor-net, Cassidy Gearhart, loyalkaspar's Rich Magan and Jacob Slutsky, Jan Mathias Steinforth of MateUniverse, Felipe Posada, Modulation Nation's Doug Purver and Cary Janks, nailgun* and Transistor's Jonathan Cannon, among others, were put into teams randomly by Dougherty-Johnson, who also added his talents to the mix. The end result – six wildly varying clips with titles derived from T.Rex tunes, each displaying a dizzying array of styles and techniques, ranging from live-action to stop-motion, to 2D and 3D.

With the project causing a stir in the creative community, the "Psst!" progenitor says he's looking forward to the next installment, slated for September. ●



Honey? Why can't you be more like him?

In the first month, it's estimated that the site garnered over 100,000 hits. And consumer response has been encouraging, says Sengel Wixom. "Georgia Pacific has received hundreds of emails from women wanting to sign their husbands up." ●

WEB FILES

Brawny Academy > www.brawnyacademy.com
Fatlips > www.fatlips.com

WEB FILES

Psst! Pass it on... > www.psstpassiton.com
Grow Design Work > www.growdesignwork.com

PLAYLIST >>>>>>>>

JUSTICE VS. SIMIAN > WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS



Directed by Partizan newcomers Rowan & Schmeltz, "We Are Your Friends" is basically an update of the hoist game Mouse Trap, albeit with passed out hipsters subbed in for rodents. Out cold

after what we can only presume was an epic left party, the slumbering revelers in the clip's first half lay helpless while an unseen mischief maker takes advantage of their vulnerability with a series of variously ingenious pranks. All it takes is one peevish cut, thrown strategically into the lap of a blindfolded victim, to spring him to life and set off an apartment-demolishing chain reaction of events. And you thought your hangover was bad.

(Prodcn: Partizan; Label: Virgin) MP

THE HORRORS > SHEENA IS A PARASITE



Lock your doors and keep up the lights – this marks Chris Cunningham's first proper promo (since his 1999 masterpiece for Björk, "All Is Full of Love"). And while it's hardly worth the wait

(that'd require at least one feature film and another Director's Label DVD), it's proof that his gift for the horrorshow visual hasn't abandoned him entirely. Starring Cunningham's muse Samantha Morton as the titular character, this 90-second performance clip is a nicely paced mélange of deep shadows, speed ramps and strobe lights. There's also a scene involving something that looks like a squid that's probably best described as a Cunningham money shot. (Prodcn: N/A; Posh: Golden Square; Label: Lbop) MP

THE SPINTO BAND > OH MANDY



The latest from Jon Watts tells the story of a small town that is razed to the ground by a devastating summer fire and rebuilt as an ice village in the winter, only to melt away the following spring.

Made with the assistance of Awesome + Mideast's Sean Connelly, "Oh Mandy" puts a fresh spin on traditional stop motion by melding the clean, storybook world of paper-cut animation with real-life elements (such as fire, cutl and ice), making it quite possibly the best thing we've seen out of the Waverly Films camp yet. (Prodcn: Colonel Blimp; Label: Bananas) MP



(A) One of Model Robot's "Coo" characters for MTV Networks International's *Barrio 19*.

MODEL CITIZENS

MODEL ROBOT CREATES CHAOTIC CARDBOARD CITY FOR MTV

➤ MTV Networks International (MTVNI) is notorious for its open briefs, and the one presented to UK prodco Bermuda Shorts and its hot animation team Model Robot for the show package of its new street culture series *Barrio 19* was no exception. The duo (Jason Jameson and Sean Miles, repped by Hornet Inc. in the US and Asia), was told only to fill a cardboard city with an animated populace.

Consider Model Robot's penchant for playfulness as seen in promos (Alfie, Psapp and The Kaiser Chiefs) as well as its broadcast design and branding work (Nickelodeon and Promo Mag). The phrase "kids in a candy store" can be applied to such an assignment.

Running rampant through the show's open, bumpers and one- to three-second teasers are a veritable smorgasbord of animated creatures – some 2D, some 3D – ranging from a spooky spider-like creature named "Bee" for reasons known only to Model Robot to the many green and blue 2D Weeble-esque characters bouncing through the set (dubbed "Coos"). And we would be remiss if we didn't mention the giant, bulbous 3D femme-Coo, named "Faa", which flies into frame every so often. It's a peculiar blend of cute, chaotic and cool that's just the right side of edgy for the six-episode series spotlighting urban culture from cities around the globe.

"Many of the characters were designed to work in both a 2D and 3D environment, interchanging at times around the cardboard city set," says Jameson via email. "We felt the mix of these techniques would give us more choice in choosing shots and help to create more dynamic scenes."

"The characters pretty much popped out of our heads, where we store a huge number of weird and wonderful creatures, all waiting for a chance to get out in some form or other," adds co-Robot Miles. "Coming up with designs and ideas for characters really is a fun part of the job."

The series, developed by MTVNI think tank The Greenhouse, premiered via MTV's European mobile channels in late April, weeks before debuting on television. Still, that didn't affect Model Robot's shooting plans – they were unaware of MTV's intentions to launch the program via mobile. "We didn't specifically deliver for multi-media," says Jameson. "MTV converted everything after from our deliverables, which were all 4:3."

Luckily, the show's open is a rush whether you're watching it on a phone or a big screen, with camera moves coursing through the cityscape providing much of the frenetic fun. Nabbing that POV proved to be one of the job's biggest challenges and required a small, three-chip security camera, which, according to Jameson, "was great to maneuver around the set and not so great when it came to camera-matching characters!"

WEB FILES

Model Robot > www.modelrobot.com
Bermuda Shorts > www.bermudashorts.co.uk

Hornet Inc. > www.hornetinc.com

I.D.

VISION OF VOICES

CA SQUARE CAPTURES LATINO ENERGY WITH VOCES BRANDING

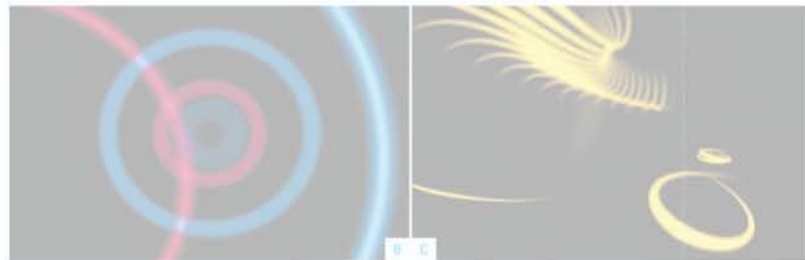
➤ Creating branding for a network is a considerable challenge, but designing a brand package that captures the essence of a multi-faceted culture seems even more daunting.

That was what Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB), in conjunction with America's Public Broadcasting System (PBS), commissioned New York-based branding/design/animation studio CA Square to do for PBS' new Latino programming block Voces. Thanks to past work for such clients as Telemundo, Fox Latino and Disney, the company was able to apply high-concept ideas to the mid-sized budget for the launch of the new Latino venture, premiering in September.

"This is unique in that it's a smaller project but it has all the aspects of a bigger brand development," says CA Square creative director Carlos Ferreyros. "Thinking big helped us – will this be a symbol of Hispanic culture in this country?"

CA Square was charged with coming up with the name for the programming block, its brand identity, show packaging and website. The branded block will encompass documentaries, biographies, and reality-based shows, created by and for the US Hispanic market but also designed to appeal to non-Hispanic audiences. Thus, every component of the project, from the name of the brand to the animations used for the show packages, had to reflect Latino culture without resorting to overly familiar iconography.

"We had to think a lot about who's going to be watching this," offers Ferreyros. "The idea was to create a brand that would act as a bridge for



(B-C) CA Square's "visual symphony" for PBS' new Latino programming block, Voces.

Latinos and non-Latinos, and get a name that could do that as well. So Voces, which is very close to 'Voices', worked, with the 'l' acting as a bridge.

"We didn't want things to be too obvious – we didn't want it to feel like Taco Bell," he continues. "We wanted something that the Hispanic community would feel proud of and would think was culturally a step ahead."

Thus, the broadcast packaging, created with LightWave and After Effects and with music from noted composer Peter Golub, was designed to resemble a "visual symphony" in which single bold colors and shapes represent five "energies" present within the Latino culture – animated blue circles depict creativity; arcing ribbons of yellow signify the language of dance; blue lines merging into a single shape reflect seduction, and so on.

"Each energy had to have its one little moment with everything coming together at the end," explains Ferreyros. "We kept thinking it would almost be like if you had to synchronize an orchestra... it can feel rough around the edges at the beginning, but all of them should come together at the end as a voice."

WEB FILES

CA Square > www.ca-square.com