

# Catch Me If You Can

**combustion**<sup>®</sup>  
**3ds max**<sup>™</sup>  
**discreet**<sup>®</sup>



## Discreet software shines in opener of Spielberg's blockbuster movie

3ds max and combustion software used for opening sequence of "Catch Me If You Can"

Academy Award<sup>®</sup>-winning director Steven Spielberg is perhaps one of the most gifted storytellers of our time. It's not surprising, therefore, that he wants the opening title sequences for his films to function as short stories introducing the movies rather than as backdrops introducing the cast and crew.

For his latest release, "Catch Me If You Can", Spielberg got the opener he wanted, thanks to the talents of French artists/animation directors Olivier Kuntzel and Florence Deygas and their CG tools of choice: Discreet **3ds max**<sup>™</sup> 5 modeling, animation, and rendering software, and **combustion**<sup>®</sup> 2.1, Discreet's vector paint, animation, and 3D-compositing software for the desktop.

Released in December 2002, DreamWorks Pictures' "Catch Me If You Can" is based on the true story of Frank Abagnale played by Leonardo DiCaprio. A master of deception, Abagnale posed as a doctor, lawyer, and co-pilot of a major airline and used his forgery skills to steal millions of dollars, all before his 21st birthday. Produced by Spielberg and Walter F. Parkes, the film also stars Tom Hanks as FBI Agent Carl Hanratty, who tries to bring Abagnale to justice. Kuntzel, Deygas and their crew at Add-A-Dog, the art studio they own and operate in Paris, created the sequence with their producers, Chris O'Reilly and Charlotte Bavasso of London's Nexus Productions. The entertaining sequence, set to a Pink Panther-esque track, highlights the cat-and-mouse game Hanratty engages in with Abagnale throughout the film.

Because the film is set in the 1960s, Spielberg wanted the opener to have a 1960s feel. "Back then, film openers had a graphic look," says Kuntzel, who, with Deygas, devised the concept and designed and directed the sequence. "Spielberg wanted the sequence to place the audience in that period while introducing the story to them."

To accomplish this goal, Kuntzel and Deygas designed the characters in the sequence to resemble flat, highly stylized cutouts. Add-A-Dog's Agnès Fauve then stamp-animated the characters. "Olivier and I created stamps in the shapes of legs, arms, bodies, and faces. I told the animator which poses I wanted for each scene and character," Deygas explains. Using the stamps and sheets of white perforated paper, Fauve created the poses, changing the body parts' positions to create the animation frame by frame, sheet by sheet. The hand-stamped look, Kuntzel says, picks up on Abagnale's hand-forged documents referred to frequently in the film.

After the images were scanned into Windows® 2000 and NT PCs, Add-A-Dog's Robin Kobrynski and Peregrine MacCafferty, under the direction of visual effects supervisor Patrice Mugnier, used Discreet's **3ds max** software to create animation loops of the stamp-animated characters. They also built and animated additional elements—cars, a particle system of bubbles and sheets of paper floating through the air—using **3ds max**. All camera moves were worked out in **3ds max** as well.

As a final step, Kobrynski, MacCafferty, and Add-A-Dog's Pierre Savel used **combustion** software to composite and color-correct the sequence so that it could be projected in the movie's Kodak 10-bit Cineon format.

According to the artists, Discreet's **3ds max** and **combustion** software proved crucial for this project. For instance, using **3ds max** the artists could precisely choreograph the entire sequence. "The opener looks simple—just typography and basic animation depicting a chase between two characters. But everything is precise, from the size of the typography, to the timing of the movement of the typography, characters and other elements," says Kuntzel. "With **3ds max** we got camera moves we couldn't have gotten otherwise."

Plus, thanks to the Direct3D hardware acceleration in **3ds max 5**, Mugnier says the crew could preview the piece in real time to quickly ensure aesthetically pleasing results. Also helpful was the network rendering in **3ds max** software. "We're not a large company with a big renderfarm. We work on basic PCs. But with the network rendering and scanline renderer in **3ds max**, we rendered the project at 2K resolution very quickly," Mugnier says.

As for **combustion**, Mugnier extols the software's robust color corrector and color look-up tables, which let the team create the appropriate color treatment and preview the results in 10-bit Cineon format. "Because this was going to film, it was important to preview the colors accurately. With **combustion**, we got accurate results."

Olivier adds that this job couldn't have been done without **3ds max** and **combustion** software. "It's a unique film opener that catches the audience's attention," he concludes. "Spielberg was very pleased with it."



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#### Additional Information

To obtain more information about Discreet systems and software, visit the Discreet website at [www.discreet.com](http://www.discreet.com) or email [product\\_info@discreet.com](mailto:product_info@discreet.com)

Contact your local reseller for sales information. Resellers are listed on the Discreet website at [www.discreet.com](http://www.discreet.com).

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