

Sight Entertainment

(www.sightus.com)

Santa Monica, California

Autodesk® Smoke®

Autodesk® Combustion®

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—Yuzaburo Saito
Owner and Effects Supervisor
Sight Entertainment, Inc.
Santa Monica, California

Smoke in Sight.

Sight Entertainment Adds Autodesk Smoke to Editing and Effects Arsenal.



Images courtesy of Casio Corporation Japan / Sight Entertainment, Inc.

Summary

Founded in 2005, Santa Monica-based Sight Entertainment is the brainchild of a trio of entertainment industry veterans. Already an experienced and successful animation and effects artist in Los Angeles, Yuzaburo Saito joined his Tokyo-based brother Takeichiro Saito, a successful advertising executive, in creating what they call a “one-stop post-production boutique delivering high-end visual effects to the entertainment industry.” The brothers were joined in the endeavor by expert Producer Christopher Lenz, which now serves the Japanese and North American markets.

In addition to two seats of Autodesk® Combustion® software, the company recently added Autodesk® Smoke® HD software to its tools, and plan to upgrade to 2K in the near future.

The Setup

Yuzaburo Saito has been using Autodesk Combustion for over six years, and the company added an Autodesk Smoke HD system in early 2008. Lured by the system’s editing and compositing capabilities, Sight Entertainment has already worked on multiple projects.

When speaking of his company’s recent addition of Autodesk Smoke to its editing and effects arsenal, Yuzaburo Saito puts it simply:

“Sight Entertainment is a growing visual effects studio. We needed just one demonstration of Autodesk Smoke to know it would be part of our future growth. Autodesk solutions have helped us gain the trust and respect of international and domestic clients, and Smoke has helped give us enough speed to perform seamless compositing of 2D and 3D elements, as well as finishing and conforms. Autodesk Smoke has accelerated our workflow and helped us solve very complicated and challenging shots in real time, and right in front of the client. It is simply the right system for Sight.”

And Sight is certainly the right studio for a multitude of clients in both Japan and the United States. The company has completed intricate effects and compositing work for commercial clients including Ford Motor Company, The Coca-Cola Company for the Minute Maid® brand, Asahi Breweries, Reebok International Limited, National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc. (NASCAR), and PepsiCo, as well as music videos for the likes of Common featuring Lily Allen (“Drivin’ Me Wild”), Leona Lewis (“Bleeding Love”), and Birdman and Lil’ Wayne (“100 Million Dollars”).

Autodesk®

Along with the outstanding performance of Smoke and Combustion, Autodesk customer support is exceptionally valuable. It is genuinely exciting to have a partner you can completely rely on for technical support, around the clock.

The Challenges

Several more recent spots have already reaped the benefits of the arrival of Autodesk Smoke, according to Lenz:

“Yuza has been working with Combustion for a while now, so he was able to pick up Smoke pretty quickly with a little help from an Autodesk instructor. We were then able to quickly finish some very challenging spots in record time. An effects-heavy spot for Suntory, a Japanese soft drink company, required a greenscreen shoot and the creation of a complete CG background. The shoot was in Japan, but we were able to complete all the visual effects work here in Santa Monica. The Smoke was an invaluable addition, especially when it came to compositing shots. We also completed a music video for director Zach Merck that required four effects shots involving the compositing of both 2D and 3D elements to create various frost and fire effects. With Smoke on our side, we were able to significantly speed up the compositing and finishing process.”

Yuzaburo encountered similar compositing challenges on recent spots for Asience, a Japanese shampoo. The Asience spot required a 3D camera view. The Sight Entertainment team, however, had only a 2D background plate:

“I had to incorporate a fully 3D camera view,” says Yuzaburo matter-of-factly. “I used the Smoke DVE in combination with Combustion to create a workable 3D background plate for the scene. It was faster and easier than with other systems, and it was much easier to change the background plate. Smoke is a great editing tool that has become a great compositing tool.”

A recent spot for Bud Light® beer also required a combination of Combustion and Smoke to ensure success:

“We hired a few Combustion paint artists to perform some complex digital painting,” says Yuzaburo. “When they were finished, I was able to easily bring all of their work into Smoke. Using the Smoke DVE, I was able to move the camera and add motion blur, as well as performing color correction.”

The Result

With almost more work than they can handle, things are definitely looking bright for Sight and, with Autodesk systems and support on their side, they look forward to creating ever-more astonishing effects work in the months to come.

“Autodesk systems are very popular in Japan, so our Japanese clients are very happy,” says Yuzaburo. “We are getting more and more American clients and projects as the months go by, however, and we’re looking forward to working on feature films and trailers. There’s lots of work to do, and we’re here to do it.”



Images courtesy of Casio Corporation Japan / Sight Entertainment, Inc.

Autodesk Smoke 2009 is the most powerful solution available, especially with the integration of some of the Flame Batch environment. For us, Smoke is the ideal way to start implementing Autodesk systems. We plan to move up and add an Autodesk® Flame® in 2009.

—Christopher Lenz
Producer,
Sight Entertainment, Inc.
Santa Monica, California