

Delhi Safari

<http://www.krayonpictures.com>

Customer Success Story
Pune, India

Autodesk® Maya®

Krayon Pictures has set a new standard for Indian Animation with Delhi Safari. The film is sure to dazzle audiences across the globe with its heartwarming story, picturesque backgrounds, charismatic characters, and high-quality stereo 3D. With powerful technology and strong creative talent, Krayon will continue to deliver world-class animation that will enable it to thrive. Krayon is slated to release two additional animated films – Kamlu and Auli – in the near future and will continue to develop additional animated feature film properties relying on a suite of Autodesk technologies.

Krayon pictures takes global moviegoers on 3D Delhi Safari

Animation studio builds proprietary pipeline with Autodesk Maya to produce one of India's first stereoscopic 3D animated features.



Image courtesy of Krayon Pictures.

Summary

India has evolved into a hotbed for CG animated filmmaking over the last few years, and Pune-based Krayon Pictures is rapidly emerging as a major industry player. The nascent 3D animation studio started five years ago as an eight-person team with an ambitious plan to produce a full-length animated feature film. Today it is home to more than 110 artists and animators with three feature films under its belt.

Krayon initially spent its first year in business ramping up—researching visual effects, story ideas and technology, and recruiting and training new talent. The studio built a customized pipeline around Maya 3D Animation Software and began developing the story for its first film. Once Director Nikhil Advani was on board, Krayon collaborated with him on a script and storyboards. In 2008, the team commenced production on Delhi Safari—Krayon's first animated adventure film.

Seeking broader global market appeal, Krayon decided to bring the film to theatres in stereoscopic 3D after it had been rendered for release in the traditional cinema format. To automate the left-eye-right-eye dual rendering process after the film was completed, Krayon turned to Maya's stereoscopic 3D toolset. In four years, Krayon's 250-person team was able to finish

the film with a budget averaging 90 per cent less than a traditional studio animated feature.

Delhi Safari is one of India's first bilingual, stereoscopic 3D movies and is set to debut on October 19, 2012. The film recounts a tale of five jungle animals—a cub, leopard, monkey, bear and parrot—that venture across India on a quest to convince parliament to save their forest from urban development.

Recreating a Journey

Delhi Safari immerses audiences in the topography of India as they travel alongside the animals in an adventure across country. From Mumbai National Park to Delhi, viewers are introduced to India's enchanting forests, barren deserts, verdant plains and more. Krayon's team of artists and animators quickly discovered that recreating this journey in an authentic fashion would prove to be a tremendous challenge.

"For the film to look and feel realistic, we needed to cull a lot of reference materials. We had to take the same journey as our main characters did to experience each of the environments ourselves, and staged live readings with actors to capture the personality of each character on camera, so our animators could give them genuine expressions and movements," shared Nishith Takia, Founder – Director, Krayon Pictures

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Image courtesy of Krayon Pictures.

Before the start of the film, a team of Krayon animators traveled across the country—culling reference cinematography of each of the locales that would be represented in the movie. Back at the studio, R&D was underway to explore various environmental and character effects such as dust, water, hair and fur that would best suit the Krayon pipeline. Krayon then brought in actors together for a run through of the script, which was shot on a five camera setup to capture distinct character traits and body language to be mimicked in CG by the animation teams.

Once all of the reference materials were compiled, Krayon had to bring them to life on film. “The real obstacle began when we started developing our 3D assets. Our team had to take inspiration from these reference materials to design, animate and stylize the characters and environments in a way that would translate onto the screen and resonate with audiences,” said Anand Bhanushali, Technology Director, Krayon Pictures. “Having a reliable and robust solution like Maya in place allowed us to confront those challenges head on.”

Embracing A Maya-Based Workflow

From the film’s inception, Bhanushali envisioned a pipeline built around Maya. A Maya user for more than 12 years, he shared, “I knew from the beginning that Maya would make a perfect fit Delhi Safari, because it’s so easy to use and it’s the industry standard in India. Because of this, most artists know the program, which would give us the added benefit of a larger talent pool to draw from.”

Bhanushali added, “With Maya, we also have enormous flexibility to customize our pipeline. Customization in Maya doesn’t require an extensive programming or coding background, because MEL and Python are so straightforward. As a result, we’re able to integrate plug-ins and build proprietary tools very quickly which proved to be a huge asset on Delhi Safari.”

With Maya and other integrated plug-ins such as shave and a haircut, mental ray and Air, the Krayon team created and rendered more than 70 unique characters, detailed matte paintings, complex animations and more. Krayon’s proprietary asset management system, connected to Maya, accelerated the entire process.

Takia added, “Autodesk technology impresses us more and more with each production, and the company’s support has been nothing short of amazing. We’re constantly up against tight deadlines and budgets, so we can’t afford downtime brought on by unreliable technology, and Autodesk understands that. Whenever we need help, it’s a phone call away. Autodesk is familiar with our team and pipeline, and guides us through any issues quickly and efficiently.”

Automating Stereoscopy with Maya

Once Krayon finished the film, the studio collaborated with agents in various regions

throughout the world to discuss approaches that might generate a greater global market appeal for the film. There was a general consensus to bring Delhi Safari to the international market in stereoscopic 3D.

“Stereo 3D is still relatively young in India, but it’s burgeoning across the globe. Audiences in North America and Europe have almost come to expect it. We knew that bringing Delhi Safari to theatres in stereo 3D would help distinguish it from others in an overcrowded marketplace. If you can create a bilingual film with national and international appeal like Delhi Safari, you’ve found the holy grail of filmmaking,” continued Takia.

Krayon turned to the stereoscopic 3D toolset in Maya to automate the entire stereoscopy process. “Maya’s stereo rig and camera helped us automate the entire 3D re-render. We were able program our own scripts, which proved to be a tremendous time-saver,” concluded Bhanushali. “The fact that we were had already built-in distinct differentiation between foreground and background elements in key sequences from the beginning, made the project very conducive to stereoscopy from the beginning.”

Results

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