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## **The Embassy Uses Luxology modo to Develop Alien Weaponry for Sony Pictures' *District 9***

*modo's Quick and Intuitive Toolset Gives Artists Ideal Modeling, 3D Paint and UV Abilities*

**San Mateo, Calif. – Aug. 19, 2009** – The robust, powerful modeling tools in [modo](#) played an essential role for visual effects artists at Vancouver, B.C.-based [The Embassy](#) as they developed alien characters, weaponry and objects for the critically acclaimed feature film, [District 9](#). The alien-apartheid drama, produced by Peter Jackson and directed by Neill Blomkamp, debuted from Sony Pictures on Aug. 14.

As they worked on a buried alien ship, an alien pet, a missile launcher and an alien exo-suit for the film, visual effects artists Simon van de Lagemaat, Paul Copeland and the rest of the team relied heavily on modo's advanced UV mapping tools, 3D painting and texturing capabilities. Some of their work involved models already created by WETA Digital, while other tasks involved ground-up modeling.

"We used modo for doing UV setup for our work on *District 9* because it has great UV tools that are really fast," says Copeland. "In fact, we even used it for organizing UVs that had already been done because the tools are so intuitive."

One of the more complex modeling tasks was modeling an alien drop ship that was buried in the sand since it involved extensive mechanical modeling and edge detailing. "modo is a very good mechanical modeler," says van de Lagemaat. "It's just easier in modo than in other applications. Plus, it has a lot of really good tools for modifying what you have, which helped a great deal as the ship went through various revisions."

Among the other modeling projects completed in modo was the creation of a base mesh for the alien pet, which is featured in cockfighting scenes. Designers began with a scan of a physical

sculpture of the character and created a displacement map that was put onto a cage made in modo. They then used modo's 3D paint tools to apply colors for baking in 3D.

"Being able to do 3D painting right in the modeling application is a very useful feature in modo," says Copeland. "You can use it for final coloration or for just throwing down basic colors to figure things out."

modo's versatility was invaluable in doing look development for the exo-suit featured in the film's climactic final sequence. "Because modo's renderer is so fast, we could quickly set up shaders and occlusion maps," says van de Lagemaat. "This was very helpful in simulating the dusty conditions on various parts of the exo-suit. We built some simple shaders and test-rendered it before moving it over to Autodesk Softimage XSI. It's great to go into the shading and rendering phase with a good idea of what something's going to look like."

As The Embassy's main modeling application, modo integrates seamlessly into a pipeline that includes Autodesk Softimage XSI, mental images mental ray, Pixologic ZBrush and Apple Shake. For *District 9*, the artists used LWOs to go back and forth between applications. No matter what changes were done further down in the pipeline, all the modeling, texturing and look development work done in modo remained intact because of modo's consistent stability.

"I like to describe modo as a stream-of-consciousness application," says van de Lagemaat. "You just work fast and you don't have to stop and read the manual. You click on a tool and everything's just right there."

### **About modo**

modo is an innovative 3D modeling, painting and rendering software designed to accelerate the creation of world-class models, associated color and normal maps, and ultra high-quality renderings. modo's modern workflow and advanced toolset easily deliver enhanced productivity for 3D artists working in design visualization, package design, game development, film visual effects, video production and graphic arts. A favorite tool among many designers and artists, modo's innovative toolset offers one of the fastest paths to content creation on the PC and Mac.

### **About Luxology**

Based in San Mateo, Calif., Luxology® LLC is an independent technology company developing next-generation 3D content creation software that enhances productivity via artist-friendly tools powered by a modern underlying architecture called Nexus®. Founded in 2002 by Allen Hastings, Stuart Ferguson and Brad Peebler, Luxology is home to some of the top 3D engineering expertise in the industry. More information on the company, its licensable Nexus® technology, its flagship product modo® and a gallery of artists' images from the active modo community is available online at [www.luxology.com](http://www.luxology.com).

### **About The Embassy**

Founded in 2002 in Vancouver, Canada, The Embassy Visual Effects Inc. was formed by award-winning digital artists. The Embassy team has worked on a variety of visual effects projects with production companies in the United States, Europe and Asia. For more information visit the company's Web site at [www.theembassyvfx.com](http://www.theembassyvfx.com).

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