



Award-winning Works

Digital Art [Non Interactive Art] Division



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Grand Prize

Tokitama Hustle

CG Moving Picture

Artist : Koji MORIMOTO
(Director, Planning)
(Japan)

■ Summary of the Festival

■ Award-Winning Works



Press Release

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2011[15th] Japan Media Arts Festival

Profiles



Koji Morimoto

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Comment

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Reason for Award

This is an odd work in which there is a strange collision of time and space that causes the player to transcend the realities and imagined everyday thoughts of the near future. The characters are two-dimensional, stock animation figures, but they are used to achieve unique effects within the emotional expression that is one of the hallmarks of Japanese animation.



Winner's Interview

—First of all I would like to ask some questions about your background as a creator of animated films. Is there any specific title that prompted you to choose a career in this genre?

The first one I'd mention is "Space Battleship Yamato," followed by "Gamba no Boken (The Adventure of Gamba)." Also, such films as "Mirai Shonen Conan (Conan, The Boy in Future)" or "Rupan Sansei (Lupin The 3rd)" played a role. I find the works of Osamu Dezaki and Hayao Miyazaki particularly interesting.

—How about comic books?

I always loved cool ones such as Jiro Kuwata's or Reiji Matsumoto's books, and also Mikiya Matsumoto's "Wild 7." Later then, when in school I encountered the work of Katsuhiro Otomo, and I was pretty excited to discover a style that was different from Osamu Tezuka's, and that didn't fit in the Gekiga genre as well. I'd rather call it something like 'cinematic.'

—Could you name a few titles or directors that influenced you directly?

Before I began to work in film I watched all kinds of movies for mere entertainment, but this changed with my job. My perspective on film changed definitely after I encountered Andrei Tarkovsky's work. I think I was around 27 at the time. My taste used to be focused mainly on movies with certain dynamism, such as demolition scenes or explosions. There are no such elements in Tarkovsky's films, and instead of dynamic physical destruction those films tear the viewer's mind in pieces. I was pretty shocked by that, and I was attracted to such themes expressing kind of a mental unsteadiness. Lately I'm especially fascinated by films where things bend and crumble and collapse although in fact nothing's happening at all.

—Have you experienced comparable effects also in music?

The influence noise and techno have on my work is indeed similar. What I discovered when listening to noise music pieces of ten or even twenty minutes length is that, once you're over a certain peak and out of the woods, that's when it gets interesting. It really tears you apart. At a certain point - I guess that's when your body is totally whacked and hits the bottom - you begin to hear on the other side the music you're actually looking for. For techno with its repeating patterns it's the same thing. It's not the music you listen to, but the point is that techno resets your mind to zero in order to make you able to hear that same 'music on the other side' you're not aware of at first. If you continue to listen long enough, the music turns into air in the end. It's all repetition, without a prospect of change. When I was 16, 17, 18, I was listening to classical music, and I particularly liked Ravel's "Bolero." If you think about it, isn't that repetitive too? Every time I work on a story I listen to such music, create an image around it, and put words on top of that. Rather than 'music' in the common sense I consider this type of music a 'tool.'

—If I remember right you mentioned once that you like Fellini's movies, too?

Yes, especially his later works. After all, aren't the whole world and its visuals nothing but hocus-pocus? Fellini's late films are where you find clear statements of this, for example when he uses vinyl to create an image of the sea. For the viewer it's the image and its feel that count, and I like this kind of symbolization. That's exactly what animated film is all about.

—When comparing your own works before and after "Memories," one can notice a significant stylistic change. I guess that's a reflection of your changing attitude?

Right, that one marks a clear turning point. My contribution to "Memories" is gaudy and ornamental, in a somewhat rococo style, and the more I worked on that the more I realized that I was in the middle of creating a world that I haven't ever been to. So, it occurred to me that, rather than painting a picture of an unknown world, it would be much more fun to put one together of items we all know. The trick is how to connect those elements. In my opinion the whole world is put together of nothing but remixes! People stumble upon things they've seen before, and that's what surprises them. It's OK to make up something completely new, but if that's too out-of-touch you risk going above people's heads. I think the point is to find the right balance.

—Changing topics and talking about technical matters, what's your opinion on computer graphics and 3-D technology?

I'm pretty much indifferent there. "Tekkon Kinkreet," for example, I made at a time when everybody began to try and get as close to reality as possible. As somebody from the animation field I was more interested in working on the plane, and I was pretty much puzzled to see people try to put their own ideas into shapes that look so realistic.

—The contents of your 4? site "Beyond City," and also your recent works suggest that you prefer bars and other common places as settings. Is that because you're aware of such locations' entertaining characteristics?

I'm in a way clear about that, but in the first place my plots are absurd. The important thing is how to illustrate everyday life, and I believe that, as long as you can't get that done you can't write an absurd story. Besides this, I feel that people's perception of 'science fiction' has changed a lot. There was a time when people were talking about SF as soon as a UFO or a spaceship appeared. Nowadays it has to be grandma's flying teapot, and it's even better when grandpa comments, "it used to fly much better". (laughs)

—Have you ever thought of working with real photography?

Yes, I'd love to work with some weird artificial objects. 4-dimensional things would be great, too.

—What do you mean by "4-dimensional"?

Let me call it "different time lapses for different objects." For example, to find a single man who's moving around in a crowd of people is a difficult task, but a long exposure time would make it easy to spot the wanderer. That's because, for that single person time flows at a different speed, and in his eyes all others are probably just air. Why not make stories with characters that each live in their own time flow? There's a yakitori place called "Iseya" in my neighborhood in Kichijoji that starts selling roast chicken around 11 in the morning, and that's when I'm sometimes visiting the place for drinking. To passers-by who peep inside those who drink there must look completely crazy, but inside it feels like late night. Try and have some booze in the morning, and after one hour you'll be totally blinded by the scenery outside. Once you enter the place your eyes switch to night mode, and the dazzling daylight reality turns into pure SF.

—After "Blade Runner" and "Akira," can you think of any other future visions than such full of ruins?

There is something I actually like about those devastated sceneries, but I sometimes think that the next image of the near future might be one that's dominated by thriving green. The image I have isn't desolate, it's green.

—An image of rather softly controlled society, if anything?

You know, there are parts in our lives here and now that are much more controlled than back in the times of socialism. It's just a question of how clear that is visible on the outside. Wasn't there a time when everybody was daydreaming of all the changes the year 2000 would bring? Now we have no such illusions anymore. If someone came and prophesied the end of the world, let's say in 2030, that would give us a push to think about what to do, but as things are now we're thrown into a vast expanse of ocean. What I have to ask myself in a situation like this is, where are we all supposed to look for material to base our works on?

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I guess my hunting ground is a 'mental' one. I used to think that there's something else out there on the surface, but I'm not interested anymore in that. It would probably be different if more and more people were now traveling to outer space, but there's not even a space station yet, and the impact of the Apollos has all gone up in smoke. I don't know if it has something to do with that, but don't you think movies that explore the inner spheres of humans have been increasing recently. When I see films like

"Cube" or "The Matrix" I feel that now they're all on that 'inner' trip.

—Please tell me about your next work.

I've been fascinated by the idea of making a movie with an additional dimension. It's still tentative, but for the title of my next one I'm having in mind "Jigen Bakudan" (with the characters for "dimension bomb," NOT "time bomb", the ed.). But I might as well choose a more plain title in the end.

Works



1995 <MEMORIES>

1995 <EXTRA>



1997 <Tokitama Hustle>



1997 <Noiseman Sound Insect>



1998 <Eikyukazoku>



1999 <Tekkon Kinkreet>



2001 <Kuchu Izakawa>



2002 <Jigen Roop>

My Favorites

tool

Photoshop, Chocolate, Copic marker(copic)

artist

Issei Suda, Matt Mahurin, Enki Bilal, Moebius, Shinichiro Kobayashi, Shuji, Terayama, David Lynch, Kobo Abe, Imiri Sakabashira, Katsuhiro Otomo, Andrei Tarkovsky

resource

Yello, Art of Noise, The Orb, The High-Lows, The Blue Hearts