

MPC Completes Gruesome Transformation and London Scapes for The Wolfman

The film went on general release on 12th February 2010

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Joe Johnston has directed a remake of the 1941 classic horror film 'The Wolfman' for Universal Studios, starring Anthony Hopkins, Emily Blunt and Benicio del Toro in the title role. MPC faced many creative challenges as the film's lead visual effects company, providing concept art and scene design which supported Johnston's vision for the film's tension-filled atmosphere. MPC's work includes: fully animated Wolfman scenes, three gruesome transformations, completely created London rooftop scenes, enhancement of live-action wolfman shots, and the film's climactic waterfall environment.

"Wolfman was a project a bunch of us here got excited about the moment we heard about it," says visual effects supervisor Adam Valdez, "It was a chance to apply our creative drive and tools to some very concentrated, difficult scenes. All of our teams brought their best to these shots. In particular, the transformation scenes required a lot of fresh ideas, trial-and-error and custom work to get what worked for Joe."div.overlay { width:1040px; height:624px; } #imgplay { margin:82px 0px 0px 190px; } #player { background:no-repeat url('/videos/news/2010/february/wolfman.jpg') top center; } #splash, #player, #player embed, #player object { width:560px; height:328px; }

MPC brought the latest in design, animation and realism to the film, bridging to Rick Baker's prosthetic makeup work and the film's atmospheric production design. Set in Victorian England, the film shows Lawrence Talbot returning to his hometown after a family tragedy, when he is attacked by a legendary beast. The London based team led by top talent such as Gary Brozenich and Adam Valdez brought to life concept art from MPC's own art and animation departments. The transformations were to be both stunningly realistic and viewed close to camera. The creative process took the team through several approaches which would give audiences something new, while keeping some sense of convention.

Concepts had to be animated to be fully developed, and then worked by hand through modelling, texturing and fur-groom stages, so that practically each transformation shot became a custom job. The transitions broke down to six painful stages, including expanding veins and skin bruising, hair growth and the visible change of muscle and bone. Cyber scans of Benicio del Toro were used as the basis for a fully articulated head rig, capable of going from the actor to a fully transformed Wolfman. Custom animation setups were built for hands and feet as well, then groomed with MPC's proprietary 'Fertility' software, offering the ability for custom hair work on a per shot basis, in order to bridge live action shots and obtain a perfect match to shots of makeup and mask enhancement. Many of these shots were extreme close-ups, requiring detail down to every pore of skin. Skin lighting and shading were pushed to the next level for this project, including new efficient methods for sub-surface scattering and fine specular modelling.

Full London rooftop environments were created, using a combination of 3D architecture and 2D matte-painting. Several different environments were entirely designed at MPC during post production, in addition to the master shots looking over the Thames River, and a time-lapse shot located under London's

iconic Tower Bridge. MPC's location in central London has proved invaluable for creating such environments via photogrammetric modelling from location shoots.

The 2D team led by Arundi Asregadoo added value to every sequence. Projecting photography onto animated wolfman faces and legs, they enhanced live action work. Transformation shots came together in compositing, where artists tracked in fine veins and skin changes, based on texture work generated by the fx department. Atmosphere was a constant issue in the film, with compositors blending in many photographic elements as well as simulated smoke and debris. And compositors worked closely with environment artists in a collaborative effort, using MPC's techniques for multi-layered 2.5D environment rendering.

More Information at www.moving-picture.com. Image and Video Courtesy of Universal Studios. Video Encoding: 3Dup.com