

Editors note: images to accompany this story available at <http://www.philpott.ca/PhaseSpace>



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PRESS RELEASE

*** For Immediate Release ***

Building a Film with PhaseSpace

Director Kory Martin Juul Creates *White Tiger Legend* Almost Single-Handedly

San Leandro, CA: July 22, 2010 – Literally a one-man army, acclaimed visual effects artist, director and producer, Kory Martin Juul relied extensively on the PhaseSpace motion capture system for production on his new animated martial arts film, *White Tiger Legend*. Through creative use of the system, and his own martial arts training, Juul was able to capture 572 shots for the film on a tight schedule using a skeleton crew with only a shoestring budget.

Juul has a wealth of experience with computer graphics and motion capture, having worked as a visual effects artist on long list of blockbuster films including *Avatar*, *Star Trek*, *Speed Racer*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, *Spider-Man 3*, *King Kong*, *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith*, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, *The Matrix Reloaded*, and *The Matrix Revolutions*.

Juul said that when it came to making his own film, "we needed a motion capture system that produced really clean data, because we didn't have the budget for hundreds of hours of clean-up. PhaseSpace allowed us to capture data that was so good, we could use it immediately for cutting the film, and then later, with minimal cleaning, use it for final animation."

White Tiger Legend tells the story of the origin of martial arts through action and insight. As Juul explains, "the film is ultimately about the heart of martial arts and the many different lessons that martial arts teach us." The story of how he is making the film is equally compelling.

Scheduled for release by early 2012, motion capture on the independent film was completed in two phases. Juul explained that the first pass involved facial motion capture during the voice track recording. Shot at San Francisco-based audio post house The Tone Lab, facial capture was done using a 10-camera configuration in a 7 X 10-foot sound booth while the actors recorded their audio takes. "A typical recording session records only audio, but we were able to collect both the audio and the facial capture at the same time," said Juul. "That allowed us to get both the expressions on the actor and the lip synch in one pass, instead of the arduous task of matching the data manually. This saves us money and saves the animators a lot of time and trouble." As Juul points out, an added benefit is that animators also have video references for the actors' performances – such as eye movements and any other subtle gestures that can be brought back in later in the process.

Joe Sigretto, sound recordist at The Tone Lab, explained that “the PhaseSpace system is amazing because it allows us to do motion capture in such a small space. There’s nothing else out there that can do that.”

“Since the data is so clean, we were watching it in real time,” said Juul. “We knew if we needed to do a take again because of an audio pop, a bad marker or the actor just needed to do another take... all that is immediately available to us without any long processing time for computer calculations.”

The PhaseSpace motion capture system uses active visible or infrared LED lights as markers, which flicker at specific frequencies, producing a unique ID for each marker. The result is a system that delivers clean motion-capture data in real time, without the occlusion and marker swap errors of passive systems.

When the audio tracks were edited, the facial motion-capture data was combined with performance captures done on a full 40 x 40 foot volume PhaseSpace motion capture stage with 32 cameras. With the exception of the female roles, Juul, a black belt in a martial art called Bok Fu, delivered all of the performances himself. In total, he shot 20 days of motion capture over the course of a 20-week shooting schedule. The 572 shots in the film include nine major fight scenes and over 30 different characters. For most of the motion-capture sessions, Juul was able to run the system and deliver the performances entirely by himself, listening to an edited audio track playing in the background for timing. “Even though my body was providing the movement for each actor, my performance was propelled by the different voices, which allowed me to move ‘in character’ for each part,” said Juul.

For the fight scenes, Juul would record one character, and then go back in and perform his opponent, often using different martial arts styles. “I could hit record, walk in, do the performance and then go back and review it. With other systems, if you walk in and out of the space you mess the whole thing up and you’ve got to start over. And as the director, I knew exactly what I wanted, so it was kind of fun. The nice thing about the active markers is they all have their own identity so the computer always knows that’s a shoulder, that’s a wrist, that’s your finger. As long as the computer can see your shoulder, it knows what it’s looking at. That’s one of the key advantages of the system. It’s not like you need 100 people in the back room to clean up the data.”

“We’re delighted to see talented young filmmakers, like Kory using our system, or Oliver Hotz at Origami Digital, who used it two years ago with a then unknown director Niels Blomkamp,” said Tracy McSheery, CEO of PhaseSpace. “Empowering artists in this way is what we envisioned when we started this company in 1994.”

About PhaseSpace Inc.

Founded in 1994, PhaseSpace was the first company to introduce advanced motion-capture technologies at an affordable price point. The PhaseSpace Impulse System makes 3D optical motion capture viable for small companies, universities, facilities and individuals. PhaseSpace utilizes custom optics, Smart Active LED markers with unique digital IDs and synthesized digital signal processor (DSP) technology to deliver real-time motion capture. PhaseSpace sets a new standard for motion capture data quality, which can save literally years of person-hours in clean-up time on large productions or complex research projects. PhaseSpace Inc. is a privately held company based in San Francisco. For more information, visit www.phasespace.com.

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