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Don't have a nightmare – follow *René Jacob's* training to harness the power of iClone 5.5 for real-time previz work



AUTHOR PROFILE

René Jacob

René works as a freelance film editor for German TV and movie productions, and produces machinima movies with iClone to bring incredible stories to life.
filmschnitt-renejacob.de

Realism's real-time renderer iClone has become an essential part of the digital content creation. The advantages of iClone are clear: the software is easy to learn and, thanks to the real-time 3D engine, it is possible to produce movie clips in a short amount of time.

iClone also provides you with a ton of animation-ready talking characters for direct performances. Any actor performance can easily be created using iClone's set of intuitive animation tools.

iClone is supported by an enthusiastic community, who create and publish a lot of machinima movies. On the

professional level, iClone is mainly used for previz of television shows, film projects and video game character creation and animation.

In early preproduction of a movie, it may be necessary to find out how the movie may look beyond the storyboards by producing an animatic, which can be created simply and easily in iClone. The software can be used to answer questions such as: what light concept will the film have, and how will the camera work in certain scenes?

Film previz

In this six-step tutorial I will show you the excellent set of tools and features that iClone



SUMMARY

FOR

iClone 5.51 Pro

TIME TAKEN

1 hour

TOPICS COVERED

Lighting
Special FX
Camera animation
Exporting

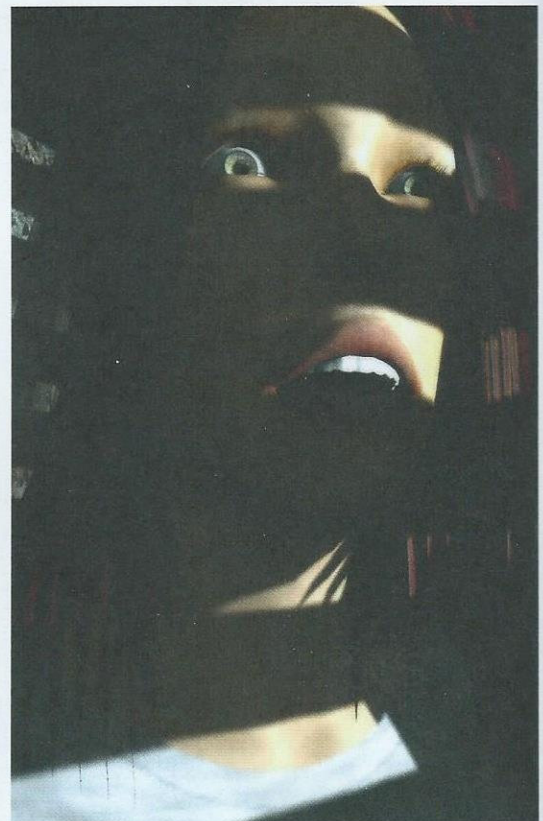
provides for previsualisation of film. To illustrate these concepts I've recreated a two-minute scene from the movie *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003, New Line Cinema) in iClone. From this scene, I take out two shots and explain how to use the software to create the desired mood.

In this tutorial I will focus on the illumination of the environment. I'll show you how to create good film lighting, special visual effects and then how to create the cameras needed to shoot the scene. At the end of this tutorial, we'll look at the options to export the finished movie.

Get the tutorial video from creativebloq.com/vault/3dw187



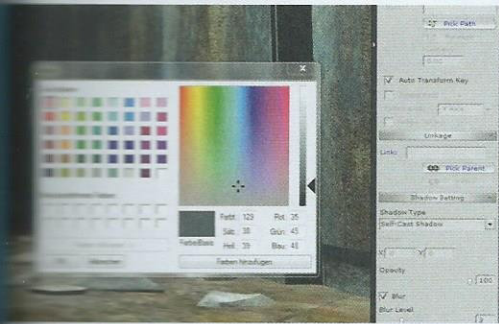
An animatic can be used to map out lighting concepts and camera moves in a film sequence





PROCESS: PREVISUALISATION WITH ICLONE

Creating an animatic with lighting and special FX



ONE OVERALL LIGHT SETTINGS

Go to Stage>Light>Modify>Shadow Settings and change Shadow Type to Selfcast Shadows. Change Opacity to 100 and tick the Blur option. Change the shadow resolution to 4096x4096, reduce the Bias to -5 and then give Shadow Range a value of 17 – a smaller number creates better shadows. Lastly tone down Ambient Light to a very dark green, almost black.

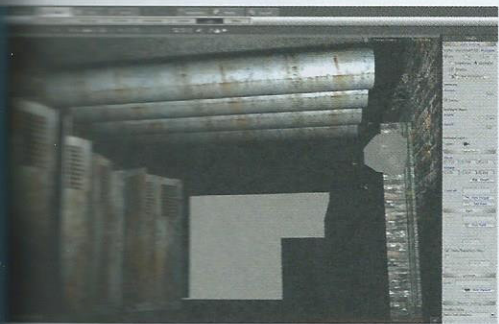


TWO ILLUMINATE A NEON TUBE

Change the default Directional Light into a spotlight and tick Shadow. Then put the Spotlight under the neon tube and set up Angle, Intensity, Colour, Decay and Falloff in the Modify panel. Put a Point Light in the same position as the Spotlight to simulate stray light. Tick Decay and reduce Multiplier to 0.4 so the Point Light will not be too strong. Then repeat these steps for the next neon tube.



Point lights do not cast shadows, they radiate their light from the centre evenly in the room. They are useful to simulate stray light



THREE EFFECT LIGHTS

Effect lights are used to enhance the lighting of a scene. Move the third Spotlight into the small room behind the plastic curtain and place so the lockers are illuminated from below. Position the fourth Spotlight so the light shines through the slits of the locker doors, directly on the face of the second avatar. Raise the Multiplier (Stage>Lights>Modify) to 4.00 to get a bright light.



FOUR SPECIAL FX

Add the particle effect Hot Tub (Set>Particle>Misc) to the small room, to create a surge of water vapour and mist. Next, create a global fog (Stage>Atmosphere>Modify). Set the fog end distance to 7000. A greenish mist will appear. The fog effects ensure the light is amplified and dark areas are brightened. I use the HDR setting to make a bloom effect for the neon tubes.



ICLONE 5

Some useful tips...

To smooth out your camera movement, right-click the Transform keys and select the Context menu: Transition Curve>Ease In & Ease Out. If you want a shaky handheld camera effect, just put an avatar into your scene, move the camera to the avatar's head and then link the camera with the head. Then apply a long idle motion to the avatar. To do this, go to Animation>Motion>MixMove Male>Stand00. If you have several direction changes in your camera movement, just create a path along which the camera will move, and link the camera with the path (Stage>Camera>Modify>Pick Path). You can then animate the camera with the path-position keys and the camera-transform keys in the timeline.



FIVE ANIMATING THE CAMERAS

Click on Stage>Camera>Modify and add new camera. Animate the camera using the Transform keys in the Timeline. Under Modify, select Depth of Field then click Pick Target and then the avatar to get him focused. Create two Depth of Field keys in the Timeline and animate the range of sharpness – if the avatar is in front of the camera, the depth of field range will narrow.



SIX EXPORT THE MOVIE

Now we will export the scene as an image sequence (each frame will be saved as a single image with consecutive numbers). Editing software recognises these sequences and renders them back as a movie clip. You can cut the scene in iClone with the Camera Switcher, but I recommend rendering every shot separately so you can adjust the lighting for each take.