

Jean-Marc Gauthier 2004-2007 Research and projects

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Jean-Marc Gauthier, Fall 2006 , All Rights Reserved for Text, Images and Visuals



“The beauty of nature lies in detail; the message, in generality. Optimal appreciation demands both, and I know no better tactic than the illustration of exciting principals by well-chosen particulars.” (From Stephen Jay Gould. *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.)

Gould’s ideas about how to describe the living environment of some of our planet’s first animals can be a source of inspiration for someone who attempts to recreate animation of living creatures. Like in Gould’s first sentence, the designer’s special attention to details conveys a sense of beauty to the viewer; but the vision of virtual spaces needs to be much broader.

I have found ways to express myself as an animator, moviemaker, designer, writer, and architect but still felt the need to communicate ideas that did not fit into any of these domains. New possibilities for expression emerge in the design of motion. Designing animated characters inside virtual worlds helps me convey ideas in ways that cannot be expressed the same way in writing, movies, photographs, architecture or other visual art. Surrealist artists from the 1920s (Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Louis Bunuel) felt that movies could tackle situations or emotions that could not be depicted in writing or in the traditional visual arts of their times. For similar reasons, topics covered in my work stretch beyond the strict domain of animation. They relate to larger concepts like the future of cinema, the place of virtual spaces in tangible public spaces, defining new experiences for the viewer of an animation, or developing new types of associations between several media that may involve both the virtual and real. I hope that my work will help you to look at virtual spaces as an immense territory for experimentation where you can build, explore, and play more easily and faster than in the physical world.

Jean-Marc Gauthier (Revised 2008)

What they wrote:

**Michael Naimark, Visiting Associate Professor, Interactive Media Division, USC
School of Cinema and Television**

“Jean-Marc’s teaching, as exemplified in his books “Building Interactive Worlds in 3D” and “Interactive 3D Actors and their Worlds”, is hands-on and project-oriented, in the ITP tradition. To survive and thrive at ITP as a teacher requires as much, and in doing so becomes a valuable learning experience for the teacher as well as for the students. His art installations, particularly over the past three years, have been particularly prolific.”

NICEBOTS

Musee d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, France
2004-2005

Robotic installation

Credits: Ann Pouchareon, Mark Argo, Daniel Hirschmann

Sponsor: Direction des Affaires Culturelles

Venue: MAMAC, Arts Electronica 2005

(Images include various views of Museum visitors interacting with the Nicebots during the exhibition, and basic bot from concept to realization.)



What they wrote:

Mark Argo, ITP alumn

“My response to the exhibit is that it's been a fantastic experience.

Firstly, it's been great to become acquainted with the every day functioning of a major museum, and the process of installing a work of art. There are major lessons to be learned on how to prepare your installation and yourself for contingencies, and how to deal with the people involved in every step of the installation from administration to security. This is the type of knowledge that is priceless, especially when it is learned with the help of an experienced tutor (Jean-Marc) and a wonderfully helpful administrator (Sylvie).

The type of exhibit that we installed is quite unique, and has provided us with many challenges. Because it's a show and atelier, we have received curious responses from the audience, some uncertain of what they're viewing and others assuming the wrong things. Seeing the interest on their faces once we explain what is taking place is one of the most rewarding experiences. They find the idea of a workshop quite intriguing and the fact that it's a robot workshop even more amazing.

Kids have marveled equally at the creations and the tools of creation, and we might have even sparked a keen interest in both art and robotics in several of the younger patrons. Even the adults are fascinated with the process of the work. Generally they seem impressed with the amount of work that goes into each bot.

Finally, the experience of being in the South of France is a prize in itself. Nice is beautiful, the food is fantastic and the people are kind and friendly. I couldn't ask for a better place to spend a couple weeks learning and reflecting on my time at school. The separation has done wonders to give me the proper buffer space to consider the next steps of my life and this exhibit has provided the firepower to shoot me in whatever direction I choose. In all, the experience is indeed unique and life changing.”



NIGHTHAWKS

Festival Premier Contact, Issy les Moulineaux, France
2005

Research on viewer's experience and storytelling inside a virtual world.

Credits: Design and code - Jean-Marc Gauthier. 3D characters - Miro Kirov and Jean-Marc Gauthier. Immersive display integration - Jean-Marc Gauthier and Fabien Barati. On-site technical assistance - Fabien Barati.

Sponsor: Le Cube

Venues: File 2005, Machinima Festival, American Museum of Moving Image

(Images include a shot of the subway entrance in front of the installation and frames from the actual project.)



What they wrote:

Claire Leroux, journalist, 2005

(Translated from French)

Male and female virtual characters interact together. Although their dialogues oscillate between banality and cruelty, they walk around the scene without the need for a linear narration. **We are in some kind of fantastic documentary, in a virtual video documentary: inside a virtual universe with characters walking around.**

One of them is the camera. Each character has an autonomous behavior and they constantly avoid each other. The camera is the only social component of the scene by greeting characters and looking for certain kinds of situations. The camera has distinctive behaviors and the styles of Hitchcock in *Rear Window*, Kubrick, *L'Avventura* by Antonioni. Jean-Marc Gauthier wants to create an immersive experience. He invites the viewer to browse around the scene and to be immersed in another time.

For his installation, JMG is directly inspired by the aesthetic and choices of the painter, Edward Hopper. Choosing a realist painter from the forties as the main theme of a real time 3D world may be surprising. JMG explains this anachronism by the style, the aesthetic and the expression of the city – the installation is designed for a garden in the heart of a city – JMG says "I am inspired by the universe of Hopper and by the position of the viewer in his paintings. He gives the feeling that we are outside the painting looking at it at a distance and at the same time introduces us to some very intimate scenes. This is what I tried to recreate in *Nighthawks*. This installation is creating an extension to Hopper's paintings."

Recreating an old New York street with the same buildings that Hopper painted in the forties is an archeological work similar to the sets of *Eyes Wide Shut* from Stanley Kubrick. Aside from the need to anchor the project in the history of United States, this installation revives a style of architecture that gradually disappears from the city. This architecture is still very present in movies and novels: it's part of the city's collective memory.



VIRTUAL ARCHEOLOGY IN APHRODISIAS

2003-2004

Research on viewer's experience and storytelling inside a virtual world.

Credits: Joint collaboration between ITP, Tisch School of the Arts and Institute of Fine Arts, Classics Department, NYU. Principal Investigator - Jean-Marc Gauthier. Co-author - Christopher Ratte. Collaborators on the Aphrodisias Project: Haluk Goksel, Zach Rosen and Philip Stinson.

Sponsor: Funding for the research is provided, in part, by NYU's CDCF 2002-2004 grant.

Venue: Institute of Fine arts, NYU, NYC

(Images include views of the virtual Agora during different times of the day.)

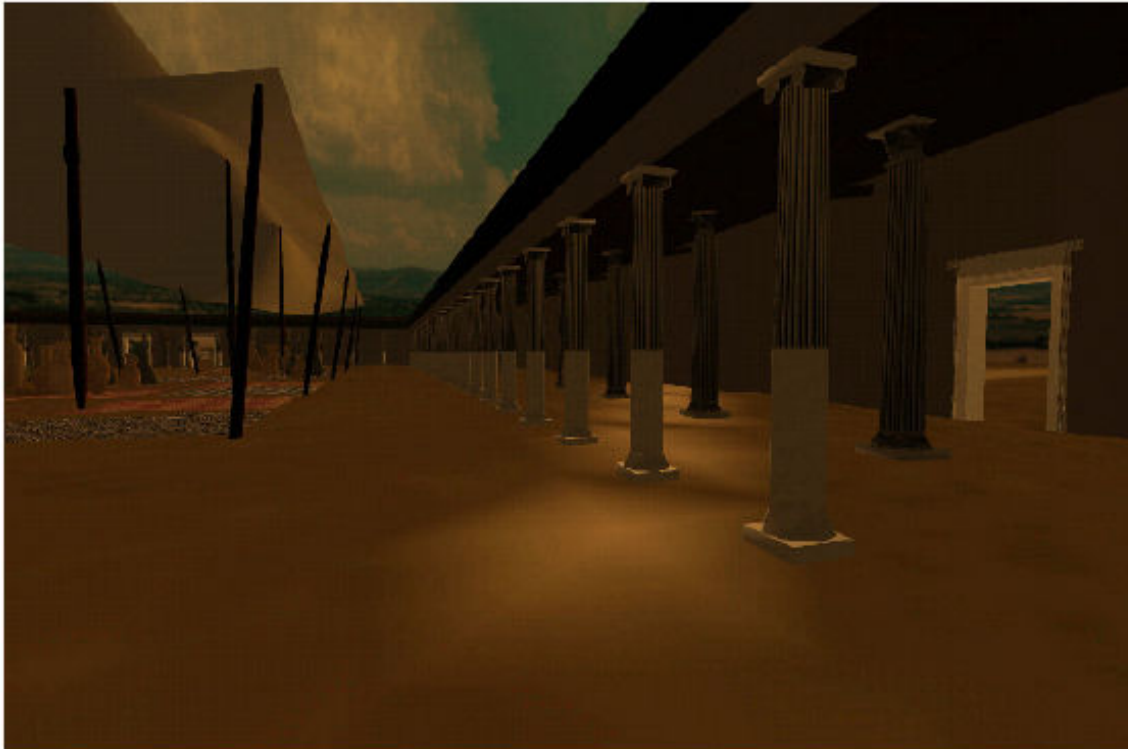


What they wrote:

Christopher Ratte, co-director of the Aphrodisias excavations

"Virtual Archeology at Aphrodisias is an architectural model of the agora at Aphrodisias that is populated by a number of self-determined virtual characters."

"The installation differs from a conventional walk-through in the use of artificial intelligence to determine the movements of the figures and the camera, rather than programming them to follow set paths. **The result is a closer approximation of a real spatial experience.**"



THE LAKE

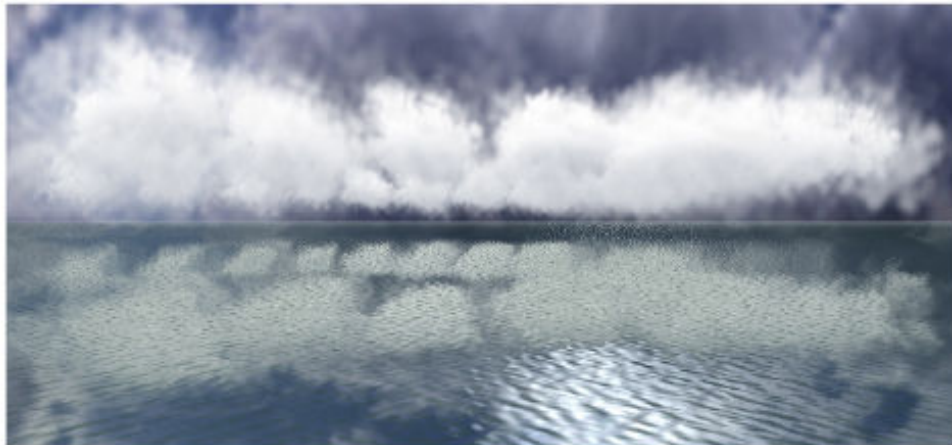
2005-2007

Virtual reality interactive installation.

Credits: Jean-Marc Gauthier.

Venue: Villa Arson

(Images include views of the lake created according to what a webcam sees.)



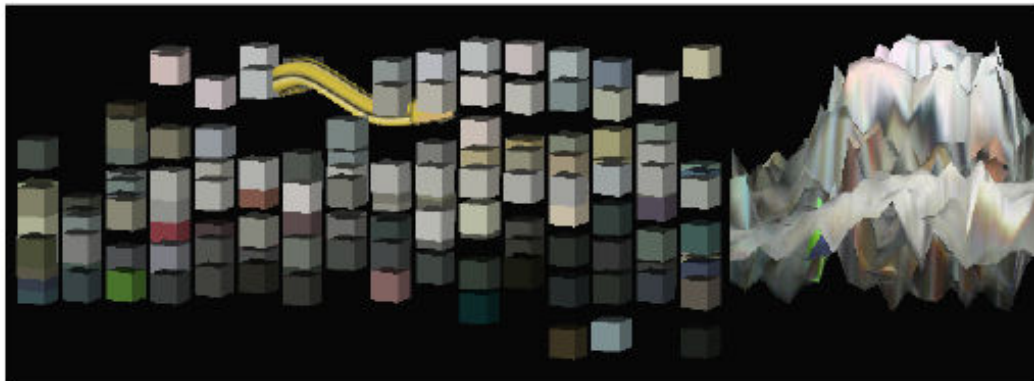
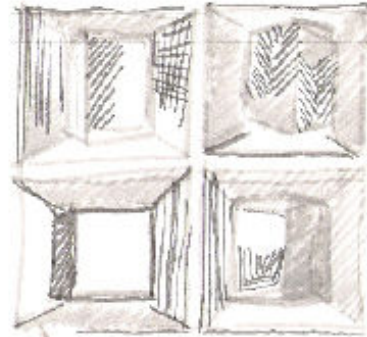
CRAYONS Homage to Sol Lewitt

2005

Immersive installation with interactive interface.

Credits: Jean-Marc Gauthier

Venue: Chelsea Art Museum. NYC. MAMAC. Nice-Fance



INFINITE CITY

2004

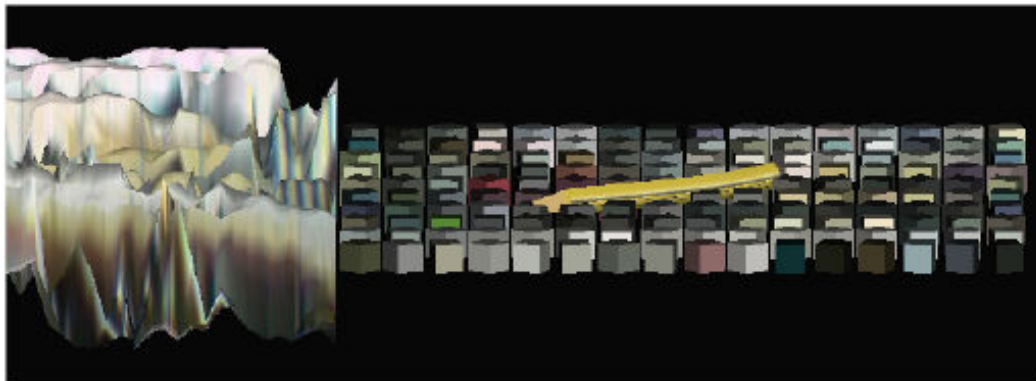
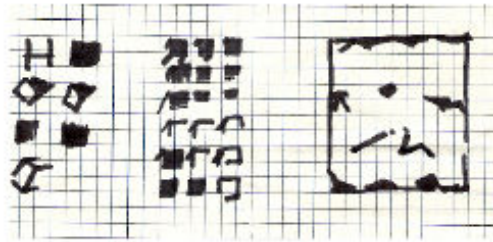
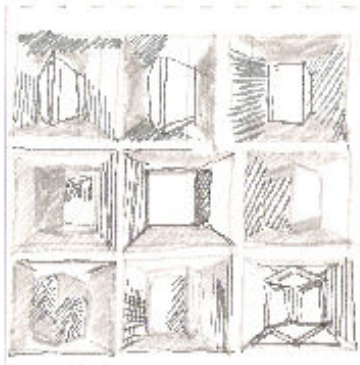
Interactive installation

Credits: Jean-Marc Gauthier, James Tunick, Miro Kirov

Venue: Convergence, Chelsea art Museum, NYU, NYC

(Images include views of the immersive display at the Chelsea Art Museum.)

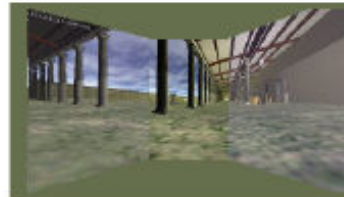
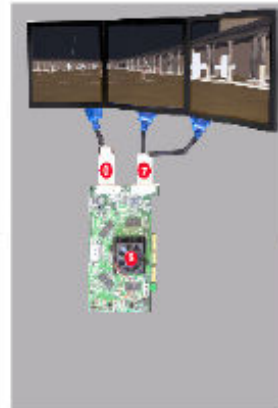
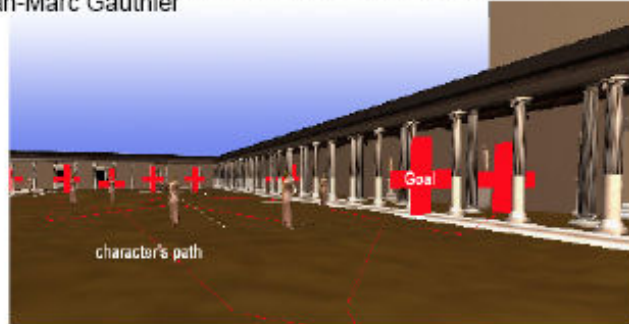




IMMERSIVE DISPLAYS

2003-2006

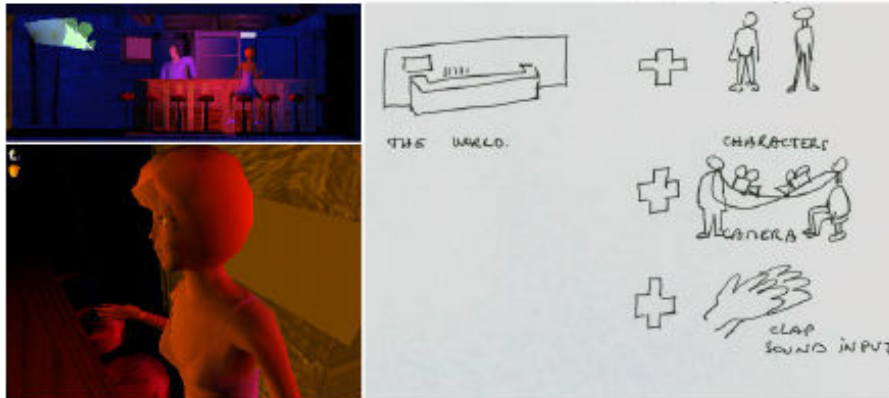
Hardware and Software design for immersive installations.
Credits: Jean-Marc Gauthier



FISH-CYCLOP CAMERAS

2003-2006

Research on virtual cameras, conceptual design and software design.
Credits: Jean-Marc Gauthier in collaboration with Zach Rosen



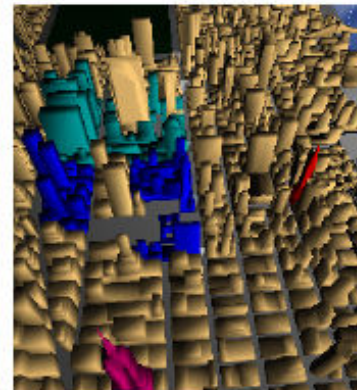
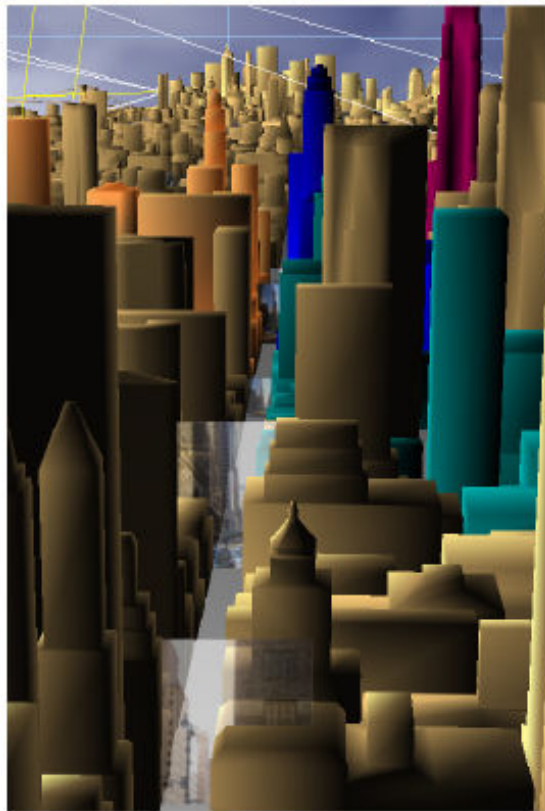
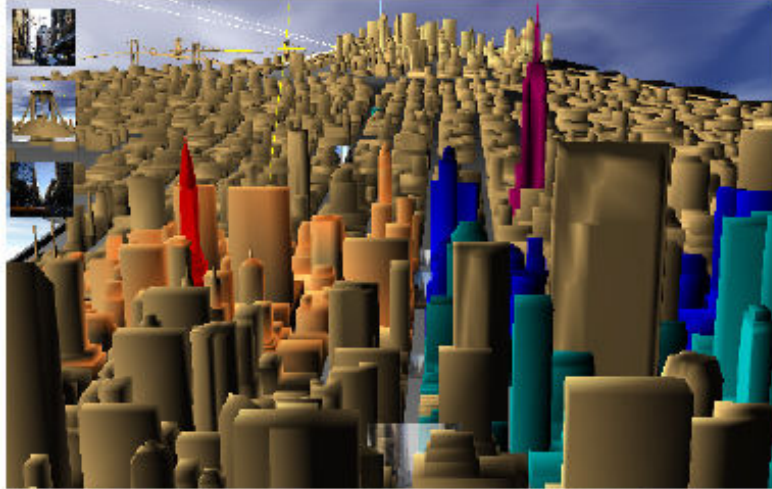
MANHATTAN, A VIRTUAL WORLD

2006

Research on virtual world and interactive interface design.

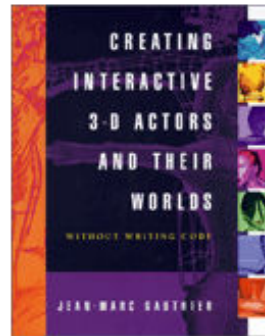
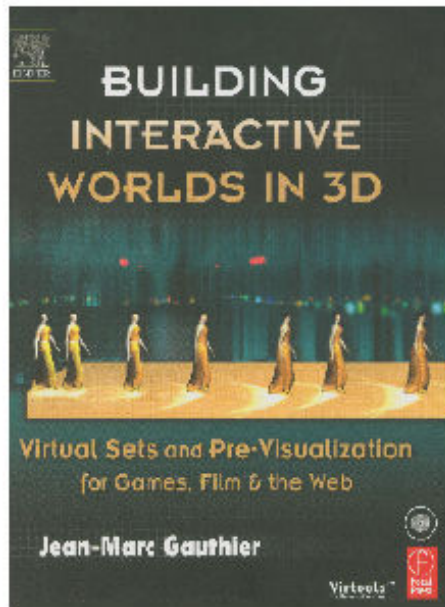
Credits: Jean-Marc Gauthier

Status: Work in progress: urban mapping, cellular phones and procedural 3D modeling.



BUILDING INTERACTIVE WORLDS IN 3D Virtual Sets and Pre-Visualization for Games, Film and the web 2005

Book published by Focal Press
Author: Jean-Marc Gauthier



What they wrote:

Michael Naimark, Visiting Associate Professor, Interactive Media Division, USC
School of Cinema and Television

“Jean-Marc’s teaching, as exemplified in his books “Building Interactive Worlds in 3D” and “Interactive 3D Actors and their Worlds”, is hands-on and project-oriented, in the ITP tradition. To survive and thrive at ITP as a teacher requires as much, and in doing so becomes a valuable learning experience for the teacher as well as for the students. His art installations, particularly over the past three years, have been particularly prolific.”

