ASK THE ARTISTS:
HASHIM
GOODSIR

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For over ten years, Hashim has been a vital part of the British real-time graphics scene. As the main Ventuz Designer at Spotted Zebra, he has created projects for both the broadcast as well as the presentation and events market. We sat down with Hashim at Spotted Zebra's office and spoke with him about creative inspirations and connecting with the community.

Ventuz:
You have worked for Spotted Zebra for over 10 years.

Hashim:
That is true. It was my first job coming out of university, and I still enjoy it. The company is growing fast at the moment, and we are looking at new partnerships and exploring new markets.

Ventuz:
Let's back up for a moment. How did you get involved in 3D graphics?

Hashim:
It really started in college. Unlike many of my colleagues, I didn't dabble in 3D when I was younger. I never even had a computer at home. But once I saw the movie "The Matrix", I was hooked. The special effects really blew my mind, and I wanted to be able to create that kind of 3D work myself. In college, I studied Multimedia and then proceeded to university, where I applied for the Animation Course. I was rejected, my guess is that they were more interested in traditional 2D animations and not so much the 3D stuff I handed in. But it turned

out ok, because I then switched to Interactive Design, which also really interested me. There I came in contact with Vizrt, which eventually scored me the job at Spotted Zebra creating broadcast graphics.

Ventuz:
When did the event market come into play for you?

Hashim:
Really only after we were introduced to Ventuz. The software convinced us from the get-go, since it made it possible to easily create interactive applications. But it took a while to attract the right customers. I do remember the first time I ever used Ventuz on a job. My task was to create an application for a touch table, and all I had to go by was a storyboard. I had no idea what I was doing, I didn't know how to set up a project, how to organize my scene. It was chaos, and I dug my way through by trial and error. But in the end, everything ran smoothly.

The next project was already a lot more straight-forward. I had to convert a Power Point presentation into Ventuz and make it more animated and 3D. I pretty much learned Ventuz on the job and I'm always learning something new which is great.

Ventuz:
How is working for the event market different from the broadcast market?

Hashim:
The broadcast market is quite predictable. You have your common amount of graphics, your lower thirds, two ways, three ways, and so forth. You know what to expect. Also, the surround-dings are very similar, the hardware environ-ment, the backends. With presentations or interactive installations, you never know what the client wants. They always ask for some-thing new and better, also in a technical sense, they never want to repeat or recreate anything. That makes it much more challenging.
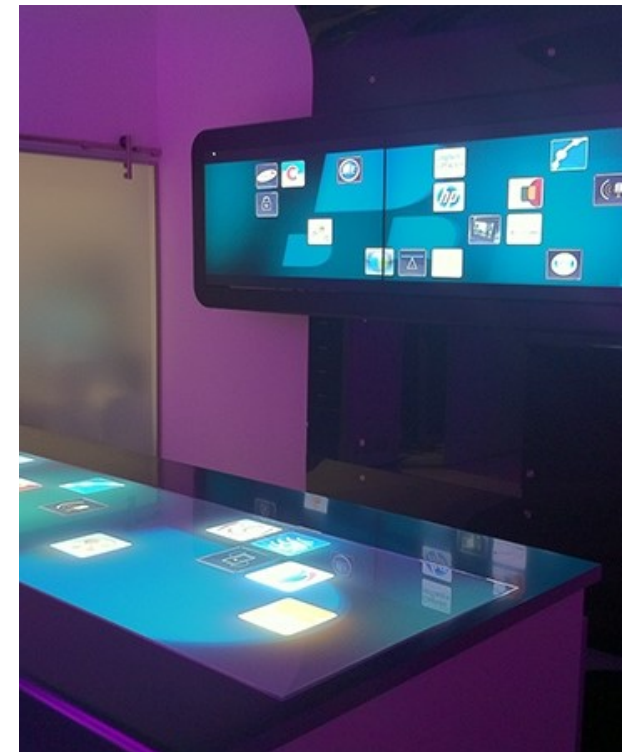
Ventuz:
Which of the two is more rewarding for you?

Hashim:
Hard to say. I like the broadcast side of it, because you get to see your work on TV, which is fun. But it is also rewarding to watch customers interact with your content and get a better experience out of it.

Ventuz:
Are you also using Ventuz for broadcast projects?

Hashim:
Ventuz is very suitable for in-studio touch applications, especially for elections and the like. We have done a few of these projects. But we have also equipped two entire stations with a complete Ventuz-powered graphics workflow: 24 Live and Arise News. It was a new experience for me. In my opinion, Ventuz is still missing a few plugins to be effective in this area, such as pie charts, bar charts and such. In this market, clients expect you to create a graphic in a short period of time, and if you use Ventuz, you might

not have all the assets available. But other than that, Ventuz performed really well. We did not encounter any let-downs.

Ventuz:
You are the most active external creator of Ventuz tutorials with a busy Youtube channel. What brings you to sit down after hours and continue to work with Ventuz?

Hashim:
I just randomly make graphics as I go along, but I like to try and recreate certain effects or visuals that I have seen somewhere. Publishing them as tutorials is a good way for me to reaffirm my approach with the community. Sometimes I receive hints from other users on how I could have achieved my goal more easily, which is great. Plus, I like to share my knowledge instead of sitting on it. I learn more that way.

Ventuz:
How important is the connection with the community for you?

Hashim:
Very important. I have made some friends over the years on Youtube. I also follow other designers and agencies for inspiration.

Ventuz:
Anyone in particular?

Hashim:
I think Dennis Schaefer is one of the best Ventuz designers out there. I would like to see him make a tutorial on how he creates his designs and animations. His work is astonishing. (Read our very first [Artist Interview with Dennis Schaefer here](#).) In general, it would be great if more Ventuzians were willing or had the time to create tutorials and show their workflows.

Ventuz:
You also work as a Ventuz trainer, don't you?

Hashim:
Yes, sometimes Spotted Zebra will send me to another agency to get them going with Ventuz. I
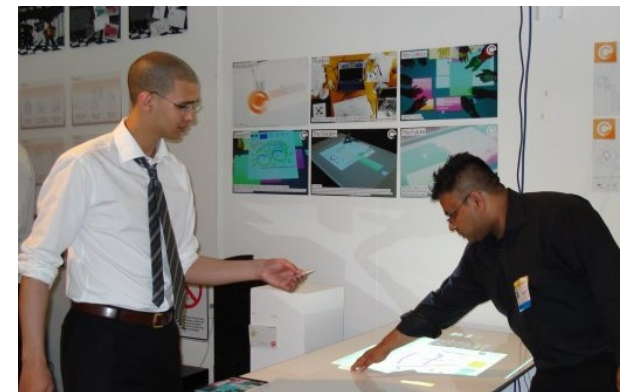
like to train by choosing real-world projects and recreating them with the trainees. Or we will jump right in and train on a project they have to complete for a client. In my opinion, this is a more effective way to learn Ventuz than going feature by feature.

Ventuz:
When you look at your customers, what is the main thing they ask you for today? How have their requests changed?

Hashim:
Clients ask for more realistic graphics all the time. To be very honest, this is still a challenge for Ventuz. But I have watched the software evolve over the years and I like where the development team is going with it. Changing the render engine instead of just adding more and more plugins is certainly the right way to go, in my opinion. Also, clients want the ability to interact with physical objects that drive digital content. This goes beyond touchscreens, everyone can use that technology on their phones. We have been increasingly using markers on objects, which trigger certain events in the

content when they are placed on the screen. This is a great solution for configurators or product presentations, because it adds the haptic level to the sensory experience.

Ventuz:
You have recently created an installation for the release of the movie "Ghost in the Shell". Tell us about that.

Hashim:
Paramount held a three-day cocktail party in an art gallery and bar called Lights of Soho here in London. They exhibited props from the movie and had a photo booth where visitors could take pictures with special effects from "Ghost in the Shell". We installed an interactive video wall on the front window with image galleries, text boxes and much more. Recreating the unique look of the movie was very exciting, and with Ventuz it was also easily done.

Ventuz:
*How did you add touch to the window?*

Hashim:
We used touch film glass, a great and flexible technology. Paramount liked it, let's hope they will call us again for the next big release.

Ventuz:
After having been around for over ten years, what can still excite you?

Hashim:
Gaming excites me. There are a ton of great projects with magnificent graphics out there. These are the effects that I want to recreate. I do play around with the Unreal Engine from time to time. They have what they call Blueprints, which is a node-based workflow. I am not a programmer, so I enjoy using a workflow that I am familiar with. In terms of hardware, excitement is not the word I would use. But I am interested to try out new gadgets, especially interaction devices, because they might be a good addition to an upcoming project. The implementation in Ventuz is usually quickly done, and then I can play around and see what kind of content and environment fits the device.

Ventuz:
What does the future have in store?

Hashim:
I want to create more unique immersive interactive experiences, and to expand my Youtube channel and collaborate with other artist to make amazing projects.
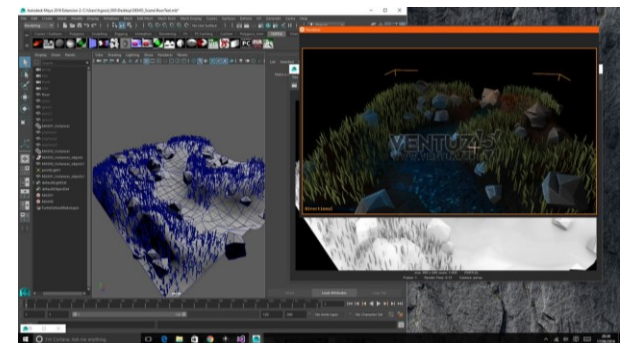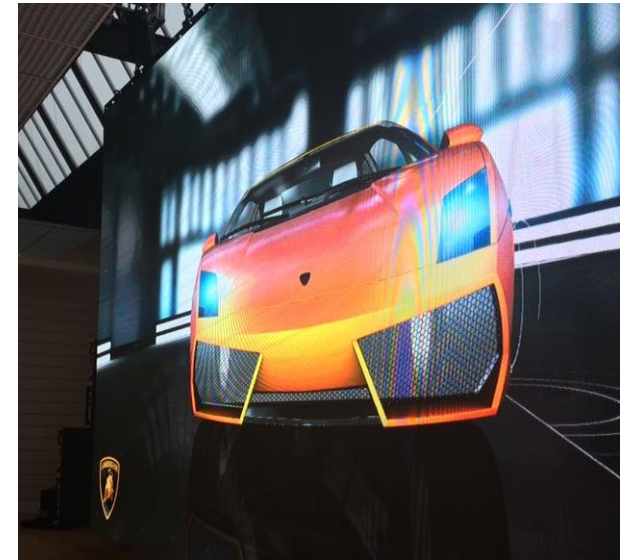
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