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SHOOTING HD
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FESTIVAL PREVIEW

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Designing for the stars

For this star fighter in Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith, all parts of the craft were modelled with solids in AutoCAD except for the rounded body and canopy, which used NURBs for the compound curve. Leong also created animations to illustrate the hinged opening canopy, the fold out wings and a means of disassembling the cockpit from the wings so as to fix the cockpit on the gimbal.

From a galaxy far, far away to Sydney's northern beaches, the visualisation skills of Jacinta Leong have been exploited in a wide range of film and television productions.

The qualified architect has developed a global reputation for her skills in creating accurate images for set design and previsualisation.

For both *Star Wars Episode II* and *III*, Leong was an assistant art director producing detailed drawings of environments and models such as the star fighter.

On *Stealth*, Leong was required to develop a detailed model of an aircraft hangar which was to be physically recreated at Fox Studios. A world away from these bug budget FX movies, a recent TVC for Kool-Aid, the US drink mix, was shot in Sydney at a beach location. Leong was asked to model the location and set for construction, eventually providing a previsualisation animated in 3ds max.

Leong credits much of the success achieved during her 13-year career in the film and television industry to the six years of dedicated training in drafting and documentation that she received while studying architecture at university. Much of her work stays behind the scenes, including drafting, 3D CAD modeling, rendering and animations. Her work usually begins with a briefing from the production designer who will provide dimensions for the set or location and props and elements.

"I'm a 'behind the scenes' technician," said Leong. "These images don't end up on the screen at the cinemas.

"My work includes drafting, 3D CAD modeling, rendering and animations. The images I create are mainly for planning and construction purposes: quoting, building, painting, dressing and shooting.

"They are created during the preproduction and production phases and are distributed to other departments such as set

TOOLKIT
- AutoCAD
- 3ds max
- PC dual Xeon 3.06GHz CPUs
- 3GB RAM
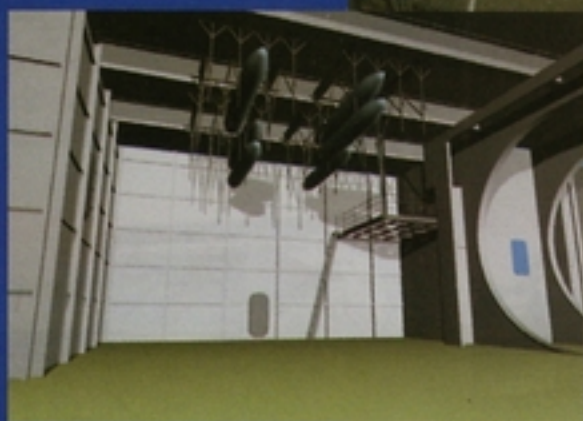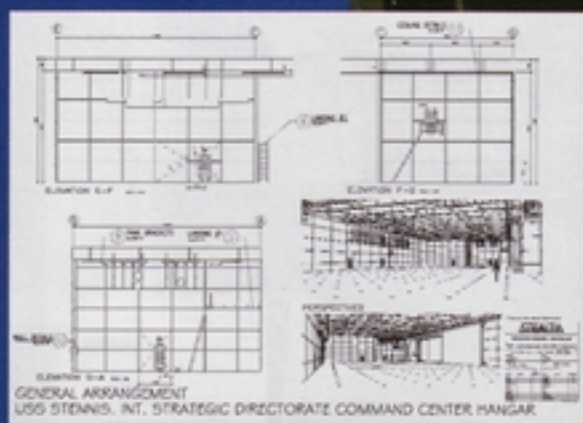
Stealth filmmakers asked Leong to help them in the recreation of a hangar below decks in a huge aircraft carrier.

For this Kool-Aid TVC shot in Sydney for the US market, Leong matched a camera with one of the storyboards so the director could check that the tree elements were in the shot behind the bamboo bar. The spot was a mix of CGI and live action, with a giant animated Kool-Aid Man and a cast of kids.

decoration, props manufacture, production office, the director, the cinematographer, gaffers, special effects, visual effects, vendors and location managers."

Leong prefers to commence each job in AutoCAD and then export it into 3dsmax for rendering and any animation that is required.

All of the drawings are dimensionally accurate so the work of building the sets and props can begin.

"To streamline workflow, I absolutely make the most of these CAD files I create," said Leong.

"From the moment the files are created, I take advantage of how they can be used and shared every step of the way. Efficiency and productivity come with using these tools."

In addition to generating concept illustrations and working drawings, Leong's work can be used to export .dxf or .igs files for cutting or milling, or .dxf or .dwg files for an engineer or lighting designer.

"If it can be drawn, it can be built, and that excites me."

"I like to have all the sections in Modelspace, and that includes dimensioning in whatever plane I've sliced through. This means if I change one thing in 3D, every view automatically updates." - Jacinta Leong