

To Shoot A Rurf

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'To Shoot a Rurf' is a surreal 3D computer animated short produced by Dwarfed Films. This atmospheric dark-comedy tells the tale of a drunken man's attempts to sober up after bingeing on mind-altering drink 'rurf'. To achieve this he must literally go inside his own head and seek the source of his headaches! The film is written, produced and directed by Shane Sheils and Paula Sheils.

For more information contact dwarfedfilms@eircom.net

THE ROOTS OF THE STORY

To Shoot A Rurf is a strange name for a movie. Where it came from was during an ideas session between co-directors/writers Shane Sheils and Paula Sheils in which they passed around storylines and plots that they thought might be fun to do. Originally a rurf was never going to be shown. When the idea of making the film as a 3D animation rather than live action came into play everything changed and countless possibilities opened up. But rurf was more than just a cute, yet annoying, character. Rurf became a psychedelic drink and state of mind in which the physical rurf characters could live and breathe.

The script called for a sleazy, downtown feel to the film: a smoky, neon lit world of isolation that reflected the lead characters state of mind. The lead character is a dishevelled drunken figure living in a world that seems preoccupied with rurf: he drinks copious amounts

of rurf and advertising signs for rurf even hang outside his window. The film essentially takes place in just two locations: a dank, rundown city apartment bathroom and the mysterious nightclub that exists only inside the man's head, which is occupied by rurfs.

Sound was an essential element from the beginning. The Sheils' idea for the soundtrack was that it should guide the viewer through the film rather than overloading him/her with a constant flow of noise or merely describing what happens onscreen in a routine manner.

Everything in To Shoot A Rurf – from character models and animation to music and editing, was done by either Shane Sheils or Paula Sheils with no outside assistance, influence or funding. To Shoot a Rurf most certainly reflects the personalities of both its directors.

“We aimed to make a film that featured action, drama and strangeness in equal measure. We set out to show a fully realised, living and breathing world in which unexpected things happen that constantly challenge the viewers expectations. When watching To Shoot A Rurf for the very first time you almost certainly cannot predict what might happen next and that’s exactly the reaction we look forward to witnessing!” [Dwarfed Films]



THE MAKING OF “TO SHOOT A RURF”

Production began mid 2006. Storyboards were drawn up by Shane Sheils and initial character concepts were designed which were then recreated as 3D models.

The lead male presented few problems except for how dishevelled he should look. The first concept model had smooth skin and slicked back, oily hair which didn't sit right with the idea of a guy who drinks psychedelic liquor in a dilapidated bathroom. A newer version was modelled which gave the man frizzy stand-up hair, rough pock marked skin and a stubbly beard. Attention to detail lead to the inclusion of both armpit and chest hair – even though it is not particularly noticeable in the completed film it all adds to the films distinctive style and tone.

The cute, squiggly little Rurf wearing the red and yellow sweater that appears in the film started life looking quite different. The first version was more slug-like, had three eyes and resembled a strange seal/hippopotamus hybrid. A rurf was supposed to be a funny little animal that defied classification, but have human characteristics (the wearing of clothes, etc) and a cheeky attitude, so the one that appears in the film fitted all the above criteria. Many other Rurf's were designed, including Rurfetta La Fey, the sultry singing rurf, her musical band and a waitress in the night club.

All the characters were rigged, clothed and textured using open source software such as Blender 3d and the Gimp. Being open source, this software is constantly updated and programmed specifically

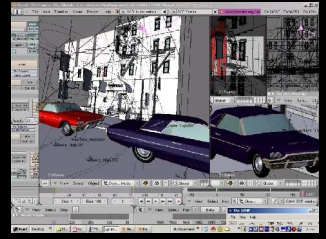
with the 3D animator/compositors needs clearly in mind.

Locations were very important in To Shoot A Rurf. As much detail as possible had to be included in order to create a thoroughly convincing world. Atmospheric effects such as smoke plumes, wind and water had to be realistically created. Other notable effects were those of the “mirror snake” sequence in which a fluid snake-like entity emerges from the bathroom mirror and attacks the man. The creature had to be made from a liquid mirrored substance and also reflect the surrounding environment and lighting.

The actual animation process took many months to achieve the smooth character movements and moody lighting setups which were then outputted to PNG format and composited with multiple layers of background, foreground and shadow maps. Compositing was done in a sequence editor, after which numerous other layering and digital FX processes such as soft glow were added.

Picture and sound edits took place simultaneously. All music, vocals and sound effects were composed/performed/created by Shane Sheils and Paula Sheils using open source and freeware software such as Audacity, Quartz Audio Master and VM keyboard to record, edit and post process. The finished movie features hundreds of audio elements, some of which barely audible alone, but working in unison assist in the creation of a distinctive and atmospheric soundscape.

To Shoot A Rurf was completed in January 2007 and is ready for the international festival circuit.



Co-Directors Filmography:

Shane Sheils (as director)

Born in Ireland. Studied both classical animation and film production & operations. Co-Founder of Dwarfed Films. Writer, director, producer, composer, animator, storyboard artist.

- 2007: To Shoot a Rurf
- 2006: Sweet Tooth
- 2006: Heli-Ball
- 2006: Musical Mishap
- 2005: Opera Baby
- 2004: The Darkside
- 2003: Thumbin' A Lift
- 2003: Frisky Fingers
- 2002: Invasion Ireland

Paula Sheils (as director)

Born in Ireland. Studied radio and television broadcasting & production. Co-Founded Dwarfed Films. Writer, director, producer and composer.

- 2007: To Shoot a Rurf
- 2006: Sweet Tooth
- 2006: Heli-Ball
- 2006: Musical Mishap
- 2005: Opera Baby
- 2005: Late Night Snack
- 2005: Night Falls
- 2000: Murder Motel

Contact Details

Web: www.dwarfedfilms.blogspot.com

Email: dwarfedfilms@eircom.net

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