



Victorian College of the Arts
Media Release 2007
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Leading Hollywood film artists to share their talents with VCA animation students

American digital matte painter, Paul Topolos (Pixar Animation Studios) and production design and storyboard artist, Ian McCaig will be guest lecturers at the VCA from Tuesday 3 – Thursday 5 July 2007.

Topolos and McCaig will conduct an intensive hands-on, three-day **story-boarding workshop**, exclusively for **VCA Film & Television's postgraduate animation students**. (Story-boarding is at the heart of the animation process and involves telling a story with pictures). Topolos and McCaig are also talented teachers and tour the world educating aspiring and professional film animators and artists.

Paul Topolos is a digital matte painter at Pixar – one of animated film production's most vital roles. He played a key artistic role on Disney*Pixar's latest animated film, *Ratatouille* as a digital matte painter on several of the film's memorable and dramatic environmental shots. He is responsible for creating many of the Paris cityscapes and backgrounds that appear in the film. (*Ratatouille* will be released in Australia in August 2007).

Topolos joined **Pixar Animation Studios** in 2002 as a digital matte painter on the Academy Award®-winning film, *The Incredibles*, where he was responsible for creating many of the film's lush backgrounds, set extensions, model paintings and various other images. He also worked on *Finding Nemo*, the short film *Lifted*, and *Cars*.

Prior to Pixar, Topolos served in a variety of roles at two of George Lucas' companies, **LucasArts** and **Lucasfilm, Ltd.** For LucasArts, he drew storyboards and concept designs, and built, painted, art directed and lit 3D sets for video and computer games. At Lucasfilm, Topolos was a storyboard artist on *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* and a matte painter in the pre-visualization department on *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*.

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Ian McCaig is an internationally recognized and award winning artist and one of the motion picture industry's leading conceptual designers. His exceptional command of human anatomy, character, emotional expression and visual narrative make him one of the most sought after artists working in media today. McCaig has taught drawing and storytelling both publicly and privately for over twenty years. In addition to being an acclaimed illustrator and artist he has worked as a director and screenwriter.

McCaig has worked for **Lucasfilm** as one of the principal designers on *Star Wars Episode I — The Phantom Menace*, *Star Wars Episode II—Attack of the Clones*, and: *Star Wars Episode III — Revenge of the Sith*. His work includes the landmark designs for the characters Queen Amidala and Darth Maul.

Among his other film credits are James Cameron's *Terminator II*, Steven Spielberg's *Hook*, Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*, Neil Jordan's *Interview With the Vampire*, Sony/Revolution/Universal's *Peter Pan*, and Warner Brothers' *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

Robert Stephenson, Co-head of Animation at VCA, said, "it's exciting to have artists of Paul and Ian's calibre visit VCA Film & TV - to sit down with the animation students on a one-to-one basis, to provide feedback and inspiration. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students."

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Paul Topolos will be in Australia for the **Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) Pixar: 20 years of Animation** exhibition, running **28 June to 14 October 2007**, which celebrates the original works of art behind films such as *Toy Story*, *A Bug's Life*, *Finding Nemo* and *Cars*. (ACMI media releases attached)

Pixar Animation Studios, a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company, is an Academy Award® - winning film studio and creator of some of the most successful and beloved animated films of all time. The next film releases from Disney/Pixar are *Ratatouille* (June 29, 2007) and *WALL · E* (June 27, 2008). ACMI will host the Australian premiere of *Ratatouille* on 13 August, 2007.