

Here's an exclusive interview to the visual effects talent Michelangelo Frisoni that has become popular abroad

Urbanpost has interviewed Michelangelo Frisoni, a young Italian expert of that particular field known as visual effects in the cinematographic world. A talent in digital compositing and matchmoving that represents a digital, flexible and skillful generation. Michelangelo has always been fond of cinema and visual effects and he told us the secrets of his particular profession. He left Rimini and his passion brought him to the USA where he found a lot of estimators of his talent.

Michelangelo, as we read the news about your career, we're really impressed by your particular passion for the visual effects in the cinematographic world. When did this passion start to grow?

I've always been fond of cinema, most of all I was interested in the graphical-computer images and in fact I've grown up watching Matrix and playing Metal Gear Solid; when I was a little boy I used to ask me how they succeeded in producing scenes as the ones of Neo that dodged bullets and how they could turn green studios into fictional sets. That's all also thanks to my father that is an artist and he's always made me notice the graphical-computer details both in the movies as well as in the video games. Once, I was 13 and I was filming my brother that was jumping on the bed. Suddenly my videocamera turned off so I changed the battery and I started again to shoot in the same position as before; my brother wasn't on the bed yet and he didn't jump on it neither later...I charged these videos on the computer and I realized that editing the scenes I was producing the first special effect of my life: my brother that suddenly disappears...just think about how excited I was! Since then, I decided that I'd go in for visual effects.

After the high-school graduation, you went to America, Los Angeles, to study direction and post production and that's what helped you become an expert. Which side of this unknown but useful profession did attract you more?

I have to say that, as son of an artist, I've always been pushed to observe the reality with all its lights, glares, compositions and colors. I used to play with special effects and my first intention was to create explosions because I've always loved them. By now, I can tell you that, as a child, what attracted me more was to create something that didn't exist and made it feel real. Now that my experience and knowledge have grown, I realize even more how fascinating is this art (because it is a form of art!) that studies and looks for the smallest detail, and it forces you to study the reality making you notice how beautiful and complex it is. It forces me to observe and in so doing it forces me to pay attention to what it's happening all around...of course this is the path I see in front of me and the one I want to go on following. In the meanwhile, I spend my free-time filmmaking because I'm also keen on editing and direction and so sometimes I produce some advertisings and short films.

Tell us the secrets of this little known profession of the cinema world.

I will start by saying that I hope not to ruin to anybody the next movie viewing because, you know, usually when I say what I'm going to say now, people are disappointed...but I have to say that almost every scene that you see in a movie has been worked with some invisible visual effects. Mostly it's about removing unwanted objects from the scene or adding useful elements for the composition of it (such as lights, shadows, etc.), parked cars, people walking in the background and other backgrounds that have been shot separately or produced in cgi and then added to the scene...sometimes it happens that I produce also digital-make up but I don't really like it. There's no real special effect without an adjustment made by VFX. There are a lot of people that learn this profession from tutorials on the web, online course or on books, and I'm one of them.

Your collaboration with Freddy Wong in the pretty famous series "Video Game High School" and with the director Mystery Guitar Man allowed you to collaborate later with some important people. What does it mean for a 23-year-old boy as you?

For me, it's been a real conquest because it reassured me about the path I was going through. As regards Italian collaborations I worked and I still work as a VFX artist for the web series "Cotto&Frullato" (Cooked&Whipped- *Ed*). I also worked for "Fuga dalla morte" (escape from death- *Ed*) by Michael Righini, for a musical video of the singer Fabio Concato and for other projects. As regards Freddy Wong, both in the first and in the second season of Videogame High School I was lucky to work on some shots and with a team of young guys; the same was for Mystery Guitar Man: a lot of creative freedom and a lot of regard for my job.

Furthermore, you worked side by side with Joel Hynek, the inventor of the "bullet time" effect of Matrix and the winner of the Academy Awards for the best visual effects in "What dreams may come". Tell us how you made this dream come true.

Yes, that's true, I was lucky to work together with Joel Hynek for the effects of a musical video of a famous singer called Meital Dohan, the song was Give Us Back Love. I had to produce some effects for two other guys that had been chosen with me for that work; the video had already been shot and the special effects supervisor was him. The first time we met I almost cried because my passion for special effects mostly was born from the effect he had created...the coincidence was that in the period when I met him, I was realizing an effect similar to the bullet time for the Italian series of Michael Righini, just imagine my excitement when I showed him my work...I think that was the biggest proof that what I was doing was really what I wanted to. Working side by side for two weeks allows us to become friends, and for me that's crazy.

In Italy you have also collaborated with the production and post-production studio called Hive Division. So, there's a place for filmmakers like you in our country too, isn't it?

I was lucky enough to collaborate with Hive Division in two projects: the first is about the effects of a movie called "Aurora" (*Dawn-Ed*), the second one is the fan based film of Metal Gear Solid called Metal Gear Solid:philanthropy, The Land Where Truth Was Born. It was entirely produced by the studio and its pilot came out some months ago. In Italy I met amazing people, usually good and skilled guys. Besides the Hive Division troupe, that is good at working at high level both with Italy and abroad, there are also the guys of Cooked&Whipped where I've been working since 2012, they're really good and excellent in their job. Unfortunately Italy hardly allows us to do this kind of job and to earn. It's really a shame how we're treated here. My place isn't here in Italy, not right now...I had the opportunity to find a sponsor in the USA and so I want to take this chance.

What is the cool thing about your job?

It's an amazing job because it's a research so it's always in transformation: technologies, possibilities, specializations, requests...it all changes and the shots are never the same. Most of all, this job allows you to work with teams composed by several creative people, and this is amazing. Someone could think this is a job that forces you to stay in front of a computer keeping you out from social life but actually that's not true because this job demands teamworking and communication abilities, the computer is just an instrument. I love also the fact that it allows you to travel a lot and every day I find out that the artists that do this kind of job are really humble, always ready to give advices and help you and I think that's a rare thing to find in other cinematographic fields.