

Description of the Entered Animation (contents, concept, technical development, etc.)

Law of Averages takes place in a lush garden. The temptation in this garden, is an interactive theater called The Big Ghost. Vynola, an exotic Bird-like creature, is the bawdy tour guide in this endlessly exciting Cyber world (as long as the viewers have money to pay for it.) Destitute people, addicted to this entertainment, are frequently in the vicinity of the theater. Every one has a place that they live, some of them have a wall or two. They all have a couch and a TV because it helps them think. The Big Ghost is the only actual building in this garden.

My work is informed by the politics of technology, sex and society. The clip I have submitted from Law of Averages begins with a directive written in stone detailing restrictive rules of life. This leads to a frenzied eating scene with Vynola in the Big Ghost. Like everything in the Big Ghost, it ends abruptly without warning when the money runs out. The narrator walks through the street and goes to his job with a large telecommunications firm. He invents sounds that customers think is interference. The customers then pay the company to stop playing them. Later, the narrator goes to visit his soon to be lover, who is trying to put the cat out for the night. Their relationship becomes complicated by a lack of exact compatibility, daily compromise and occasional sensuousness. This segment ends as the narrator, tempted by the lure of Vynola, is stopped when a man sets himself on fire outside the Big Ghost.

As I developed this project it became clear that the key to this work is in the portrayed environment. It is an environment full of contradictions. While it is a lush world, the plants and flowers are frequently personified spewing pollen, eating things or stretching their stamens out to rub against each other.

The Big Ghost is a monolithic structure amid the trees. The name, The Big Ghost, was used by an indigenous rain forest tribe in Brazil, specifically, Chief Kanhonk of the Kaiapo Indians, to describe television. The Kaiapo Indians have no written language, their history was handed down through story telling. Television became a substitute for that story telling so a generation grew up with no interest in their history. In Law of Averages, The Big Ghost is not just an evolved constantly exciting entertainment. It is an addictive substitute for all interpersonal relationships.

There is an additional unseen layer of control that is also being exercised in this garden. Its presence is represented only as stone slabs with directives giving exacting and restrictive guidelines on how to live your life. These slabs enter as scene dividers and they are carved with statements like: Trust Your Government, Aspire to Wall to Wall Carpeting, Buy Life Insurance, Be Caller #7 and Win the Free Dinner.

Through out the animation, the narrator speaks in first person of "I" and "you." No further names are given as the relationship unfolds: I meet you at a party where you are dancing so wildly you are politely escorted out. When I come to your place you have two cats, the evil cat breaks a bottle and becomes difficult to put out for the night. I see you at a bar when you said you had to work and imagine the fight we could have. I want to call a friend and talk to them about you, but everyone in my phone book is dead.

The main conflict arises between this relationship and the relationship the narrator believes he has with Vynola in the Big Ghost. The animation is ambiguously resolved in quite companionship while The Big Ghost looms in the back ground.

With this work I wanted to present an allegorical look at complex issues of contemporary life. I did not want to present a happily arrived at conclusion. I wanted to show imperfect characters making decisions about daily events while enduring the complications of technology, overly simplified doctrines for living, their pets and each other.

While length has no virtue over brevity, I knew I could not begin to address all of these ideas in an extremely short form. I also knew that this is basically a non-commercial idea, so it could not be developed into a highly fundable feature. I knew I could develop and commit a small amount of resources to this project. I especially knew I could commit a large amount of my time to make it happen.

I began developing the script for Law of Averages in 1991 and work on it off and on through 1992. I spent another year researching 3-D software, while casting, recording voices and developing a storybaord. I then took a 15 month leave of absence from my job and devoted myself full time, with Lisa Slates as my part-time assistant, toward animation production. I then spent another six months working with John McDanial on sound, laying in voices, creating sound effects, music and the final sound mix. Accurately matching the type of sound to the portrayed image along with appropriate ambiance is absolutely critical to make this world believable. I told every one who was involved with the project that the animation was finished in early 1996 and threw a party.

This project was produced primarily on two computers, a Power Mac 6100/60 and a Pentium 60, networked together by ethernet. All the software was commercially available and relatively inexpensive. It has been my continuing effort to work with materials that are readily available. The ability to create using technology is no longer dictated by access to high-end equipment. It is available on every laptop and desktop.