The Battle of the Titans

Completed: 07-04-2019

In this second series of Shooting the Past, we see some familiar faces returning to a historical setting. The story begins with a fierce battle between two gladiators, but after a few scenes, it becomes clear that they are two models in a studio, working on a set for a photo session. While preparing for a new setting, one of the crew members returns to a dressing room backstage. There he encounters another photo model. A half-naked muscular guy, with massive arms and a hairy chest, still wet from a quick shower. The turn of events that follows seems too good to be true...

In this project, I tried to combine my usual working methods with some new techniques. For the gallery, I used several models generated by photogrammetry, and for the animation, I used a series of motion capture files to bring the battling Titans to life.

The Studio

This studio is based on a model called *Green Screen Studio* and for the background, I used a somewhat different type of model than usual. The arches, fountains, sculptures, and vases of the decor are created by a technique called *photogrammetry*. With this method, the 3D models are generated by using the measurements and mapping from a series of photographs. The models are thus the digital versions of real objects and are therefore far more realistic.
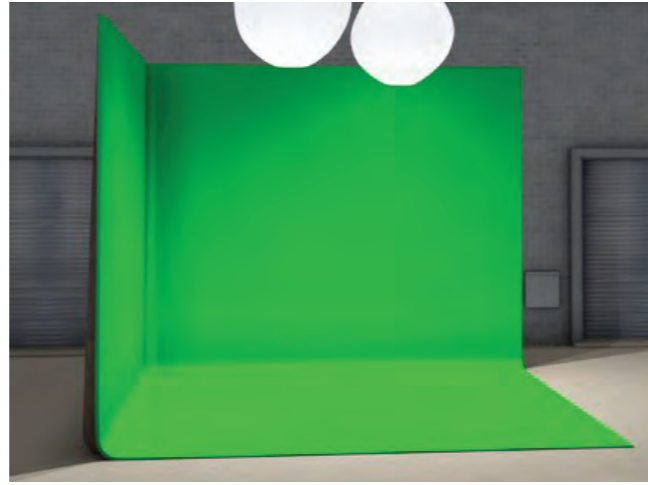
This method is not new, but with the new digital techniques, the results can be truly amazing. To give an idea of what amateurs and artists have been posting in recent years, have a look at the site of *Sketchfab*! (sketchfab.com) A section of the available models can be downloaded, and the architectural and cultural categories are especially interesting for my projects. The downside of these objects is however that the files are very big and difficult to modify. The colors, light intensity, and shadows are "baked" into the object's texture, so it's difficult to integrate them into another environment.

The walls and arches are taken from the Triumphal Arch in Volubilis (Morocco), the fountain stands on the Palazzo Priori in Viterbo (Italy), the large vases are ornaments in the garden of the Konopiste Castle (Czech Republic).

The sculptures are:
• Aeneas and Anchises by Antoine Coysevox (Lyon, 1640 - Paris, 1720)
  Marbre H. : 2,64 m - L. : 1,14 m - Pr. : 1,10 m
  Musée du Louvre
• Jason with the Golden Fleece, (1803) by Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770 - 1844), made in Rome, marble, height: 242 cm. Thorvaldsen Museum (Copenhagen, Denmark)
• A Roman warrior, (1820-1821) by Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770 - 1844). Originally destined for the sermon of John the Baptist, Our Lady Church, Copenhagen, but not used. Original Model. Plaster. 194 cm Thorvaldsen Museum (Copenhagen, Denmark)
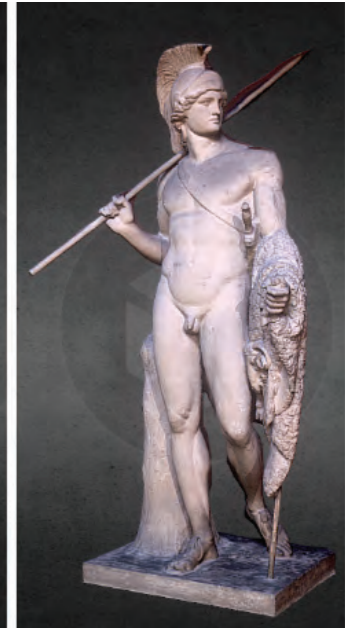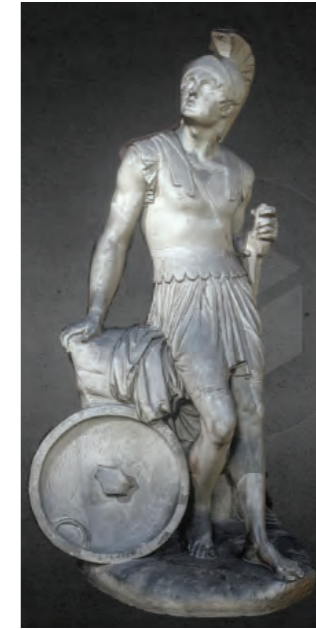
The landscape in the background is a painting of the Walhalla memorial by *Leo von Klenze*.

The Dressing Room

The dressing room is the main stage of this series, the place where all the hard action and the ultimate battle of the Titans takes place. The room is based on several models of portrait and fashion studios, everyday toiletries, and interior design props.

The idea was to create a stylish backstage room, a more intimate place, with plenty of stuff lying around to provide some interesting backgrounds for the more intimate scenes.


Animation

Another digital technology that is developing very rapidly is that of *motion capture*. With this method, the 3D model is animated by using real motion recordings of people or objects.

Nowadays this technique is massively applied in the game and animation industry, and no major fantasy, superhero, or sci-fi movie is done without it.

It's not exactly the first time I have used this method, for I did some experiments with it for the Private Dancers animation before. But it took me some time to solve some ongoing (deformations) issues and to figure out how to get it to work properly. I'm currently still experimenting, but the results so far are realistic enough and it works very fast. One just links the model to a motion file and off it goes. That is if you have the right files.

Unfortunately, a lot of the free stuff out there is of poor quality, with jerky motions and inaccurate movements. Most of the animations are also very short and fragmented. So, a lot of adjustments and tinkering is needed to piece
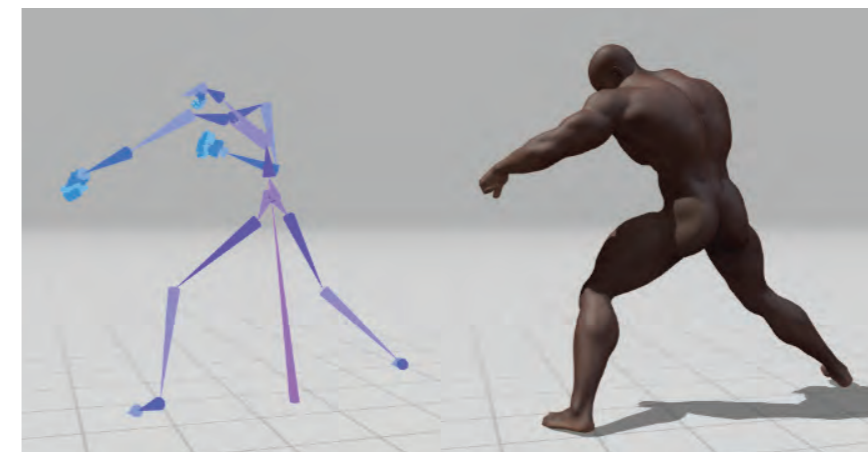
a scene together, and, in the end, the whole process continues to take a lot of time. Files of good quality are very expensive, not always compatible with the model in use and the range of available movements is somewhat limited (combat, dance, sport, adventure, superhero, etc.) So far, I haven't seen any applicable erotic files of this type. Pity!