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- Digital Production “Lamborghini Estoque” -

Lamborghini Unveils Estoque Concept Car with 3D Film Produced by Mackevision and Philip and Keuntje

Italian sports car maker Lamborghini premiered its newest concept car, the “Estoque” at the 2008 Paris Auto Show. Stephan Winkelmann, president of Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. unveiled the new prototype on October 1 and wowed the audience with the company’s four-door, high-end sports car. The world premiere was accompanied by a product film produced by the 3D experts at Stuttgart’s Mackevision Medien Design GmbH based on the creative concept formulated by Lamborghini’s chief advertising agency, Hamburg’s Philipp and Keuntje. Joachim Lincke, art director and CEO of Mackevision gives an overview of the facts and background surrounding the production of the movie.

The Lamborghini Estoque – concept car speaks to a new market

The Lamborghini Estoque is a concept car that the Italian sports carmaker hopes will capture the attention of a wider market. With its four doors, generous dimensions and striking coupe silhouette, the Estoque is a high-end sports sedan. Equipped with the same 560 HP 10-cylinder engine used in the Lamborghini Gallardo, this new model has the sportiness and driving power of its two-door predecessor, but is the first Lamborghini to also appeal to an exclusive target group of driving enthusiasts who ride with their family or chauffeur.

Lamborghini Estoque image film – assignment of the project

The plan was to introduce the speedster to the public for the first time at the Paris Auto Show on October 1, 2008. Lamborghini CEO, Stephan Winkelmann, wished to unveil the vehicle prefaced by a two-minute product film meant to convey the excitement created by Lamborghini to the press in a show of multi-media fireworks.

Hamburg’s advertising agency Philipp and Keuntje, which has guided Lamborghini’s worldwide communication for more than ten years, was in charge of developing the concept.



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The ad agency then tapped Mackevision Medien Design GmbH of Stuttgart to handle the technical side of producing the film and image content. One of the reasons for selecting 3D-specialist Mackevision was its vast portfolio of image films and productions for the world's leading car manufacturers such as Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Volkswagen, Porsche and Chrysler. In addition to the auto show movie and the press release movie, the project involved the production of ten print images for use in automotive media, as well as a calendar image and a Web teaser scheduled to show brief clips from the movie two weeks before the tradeshow.

Mackevision had a mere four weeks to produce the movie and the vehicle images.

Lamborghini Estoque product film – appealing to an audience

Philipp and Keuntje, along with Mackevision, were given the task of creating and bringing to life a concept that satisfies Lamborghini's requirement for creative perfection and appeals equally to old and new target audiences.

The movie storyboard

The concept created by Philipp and Keuntje envisioned dividing the movie into two parts; one part without the vehicle, and one with it. The first part consists of vibrant graphic elements, photos and vector graphics depicting the daily routine of a typical lifestyle-oriented individual in five chapters.

The movie's guiding idea is that everything is becoming progressively faster as we move through our lives, barely able to catch our breath. The Estoque now enables us to finally keep up and live each moment of our lives with newfound excitement and intensity.

Following the completion of all five chapters – each showing increasingly faster image sequences – an accelerating image rewinds to the start of the sequence, ending with the claim "Life is fast – don't miss it." This message at the center of the first part inevitably leads the viewer to the new Lamborghini that has the power to keep up with our increasingly fast-paced world. Dominating the second part of the movie, the Estoque is the element that ties all lifestyle phases together.

Starting out as a photorealistic 3D model before transforming into a bicolor comic style image (toon shading) in the next sequence, the vehicle provides a striking contrast in the second part of the movie. This contrast, and playing with image fragments in quick cuts, runs through the entire second part, flowing together to express another central message at the end of the movie: "'Life. Less ordinary' – The new Lamborghini Estoque."



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Bringing the concept to life

Before Mackevision could start bringing the storyboard to life, the graphic animation approach had to be defined. Numerous graphic and creative approaches were therefore tested during a two-week long style-finding phase. The introduction to the cult classic "Stranger than Fiction" served as the agency's model for the Lamborghini teaser. The underlying graphic concept was ultimately based on this cinematic example. The movie uses photos and videos of international metropolises, landmarks of world cities, places and buildings inviting with flair and atmosphere-charged scenes. The photos and videos, which describe different lifestyle phases in each chapter of the storyboard, are spliced together with simple graphic tools to create a uniform element. Once the basic graphic concept was established, the next step was a long mood phase in which numerous mood boards were created, discussed and continuously refined.



Developing the mood board for Chapter 1 "Seeing the world": The international metropolises should feel palpable to the audience.



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The central message running through the mood boards: "Life is fast – don't miss it"

At its world premiere, the auto show movie was to be presented on LED screens each measuring 4x2 meters. As a result, the graphic animation could not be presented as a full image, but instead had to be divided into three equally sized parts.

Technical challenges

Splitting the film over three separate screens without losing the total effect of the movie as a single unit was one of the challenges the project presented. The different 3D animations of the vehicle over three separate monitors had to also render a harmonious overall picture.

Different worlds presented in freeze frames, vector graphics, photos, photo sequences, real footage combined with motion graphics, text animation and computer-generated vehicles all had to be integrated, and the vehicle constantly had to be moved from monitor to monitor.

The individual snippets from each lifestyle phase had to be deconstructed and then put back together piece-by-piece by combining photography and graphics. To achieve this overall impression, image worlds were virtually disassembled and put back together in 3D space using After Effects and Nuke. The real challenge was generating a dynamic overall image without creating a hectic atmosphere.

"An important aspect in bringing the concept to life was building a tension that lasted throughout the entire movie. The story was not supposed to simply consist of a logical sequence, but was to convey a sense of gradual escalation and climax. The viewer must be led as if down a progressively narrowing corridor to a high-end sports sedan that instantaneously brings all lifestyle facets together," explains Laura Langhammer, producer in charge at MackeVision.



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It was initially planned to have the second part of the movie show only the 3D vehicle. Philipp and Keuntje further refined the concept in collaboration with Mackevision, culminating in the comic style as well as toon shading being applied to the Lamborghini Estoque. The result is a juxtaposition of comic style and a realistically depicted vehicle that captivates the audience with its dynamics, power and passion.

"Another challenge was incorporating photorealistic and shaded vehicles into the graphic backgrounds," explains Markus Jäck, technical art director at Mackevision. The realistically shaded vehicle was finally integrated into the existing look in a way that gave it a consistent appearance. To achieve this effect, artists used very hard reflections, sharp edges, soft lighting and high contrast colors to give the movie a photorealistic, yet stylized look. Finally, the extraordinary atmosphere of the movie was created to satisfy the equally important objectives of appealing to the world audience and remaining faithful to the intentions of the customer, Lamborghini.

Administrative challenges and further steps of the production process

The customer allowed very little time to prepare for the Paris Auto Show. For example, 40 shots for the film had to be animated in just two days. Making matters even more difficult, Lamborghini itself made some design changes to the Estoque during the production period, meaning that the finalized vehicle data were not available until the end of the production process. Against that background, Mackevision artists had to prove their gift for improvisation at this point by working with placeholders in the second portion of the movie. In addition to this challenge, an assortment of proxy images to be used in describing and visualizing the five chapters were finally made available with only one week to go. During the later stage of production, the images had to be selected and graphically enhanced and animated with vector graphics.

The accelerated splicing of individual image elements provided another source of suspense throughout the entire film. "Many vehicle shots had to be animated, camera scenes had to be imported and exported," explains Damir Zrno, 2D artist at Mackevision. First the vehicle and the animated streets had to move three-dimensionally in the movie. However, 3D movement of the images was only employed sparingly so as not to influence the high speed of the image cuts.

Philipp and Keuntje assigned sound production to another agency. To help the sound match the vision, Mackevision regularly delivered updated edits. This means that the picture sequences were not animated and created to fit the music. Instead, the music was tailored to fit the dynamics of the



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movie and integrated just before the start of the auto show. To assist in planning the elaborate light show at the Paris Auto Show, Mackevision also regularly delivered scene sequences from the movie.

“Working with Philipp and Keuntje was very constructive and at the same time extremely tough, but it would have been impossible to complete a mammoth project in such short time and with such professional quality without them. Both the agency and the customer were highly satisfied with the results. We would be happy knowing that we made a small contribution to the Lamborghini Estoque concept car going into series production within three to four years as a result of its marketing success. Our artists, who worked on this extremely challenging project, were glad to have the opportunity to prove their creative know-how by using Motion Graphics and the Cartoon Comic Look in addition to other techniques”, sums up Joachim Lincke, CEO and chief art director at Mackevision.



This article was written by Joachim Lincke, CEO of Mackevision Medien Design GmbH, Stuttgart.



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Short biography:

1997 and prior Worked for various media companies

1997 to present 2D-artist and project leader, Mackevision Medien Design GmbH

1999-2002 Lecturer for digital film program at the SAE in Munich

2000 Established the Galerie der Medien

Since 2000 Owner and CEO of the Galerie der Medien in Munich, which has since become wholly owned by Mackevision Medien Design GmbH.

Mackevision Medien Design GmbH

Mackevision Medien Design GmbH was founded in 1994. The company has its roots in the production of conventional advertising films. Today, Mackevision Medien Design GmbH, employing more than 70 specialists, is among the world's market leaders in the realm of 3D visualization, animation, visual effects and post-production for ad agencies, film studios and industrial clients. The company's headquarters is located in Stuttgart, with branch operations in Munich and Detroit.

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