



UNFRAMED, ISLE OF THE DEAD

Arnold Böcklin's famous work of art introduced by Yann Marguet in a 360° short animated film.

« Ahhhh yes! Ahh no, now yeah! It starts to look like something here. Isle of the Dead, Arnold Böcklin, 1883... It's not exactly, well... how should I put it... reassuring... But it's got a bit more style than « Black square on black background » from the beginning... FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR THE ISLE OF THE DEAD, MY CAPTAIN! »

"Isle of the Dead" is the first episode of the serie "Unframed" dedicated to the discovery of Swiss painters, produced by RTS and created by DNA Studios. Embarked aboard the rowboat of the painting "Isle of the Dead", the visitor begins the tour accompanied by the quiet boatman and guided by the voice of Yann Marguet - nothing to do with an audioguide in a museum, as you will see. All of this to create a new way to approach this famous work inspiring for many filmmakers, artists and cartoonists.

Swiss classic art has a hard time getting known by a large public and young people. In our digital era though, images are everywhere, and some of these classic works offer fascinating images. We can't go to the museum everyday and, when we do go there, we sometimes lack contextual knowledge and other meaningful information to fully appreciate it. With "Unframed", we want to shine a spotlight at them, to pass their stories and emotions on.

Written and acted by Yann Marguet, the first episode will be available publicly the 9th of November on <http://www.rts.ch/hors-cadre> and then, during November, on the different virtual reality platforms. You may also experience it at the GIFF, from 3rd to 9th November in Geneva. The spectators will board with a one-way ticket to the Isle of the Dead.

So far, three episodes are planned : the first was produced in 2017 and exposed to the Locarno Festival, as well as the GIFF in Geneva. The other two, about Felix Vallotton and Paul Klee, are expected during the course of 2018.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SERIE :

Explain the context

Les musées sont parfois très succincts dans l'information mise à disposition du public novice. Avec Hors-cadre, nous avons voulu permettre au visiteur de se plonger dans le tableau en un rien de temps dans l'oeuvre et d'y obtenir des éléments d'information essentiels à la compréhension de l'oeuvre, tout en s'amusant.

Museums can be summary when it comes to give away information to a public of newcomers. With "Unframed", we allow the visitor to dive into the painting in no time and to get some information necessary to a better understanding of the artwork - all of this in a funny way.

Highlight the Swiss painters

It is easy to think Swiss classic painting is not much developed or abundant, even though it counts many splendid artworks with captivating stories. With a selection of Swiss paintings of different times and styles, we want to offer to the spectators a glimpse of this cultural landscape. Hopefully, it could lead them to explore by themselves other Swiss artists.

Classical art modernisation

We like to think that virtual reality might reconcile people and younglings with Swiss art and culture. In doing so, we hope to contribute to the visibility of these great national artists. It's not about the reproduction of a work, but rather the explanation and the transposition re-imagined in the virtual reality.

Be fun !

All the paintings we have selected tell us a fascinating story. Böcklin depicts the passage from life to death, Vallotton speaks about life as a couple, whereas Klee casts a unique eye upon war. These artworks are all about conveying stories and emotions. Well, we want our serie to share that objective. It is the reason why "Unframed" is not a simple audioguide : it tells us another story, fun and moving, instructive and thrilling.

THE PROCESS :

Selection of an artist

Our first step is the selection of the artist. Visual aspect and potential for transposition in virtual reality are the main criteria. We have been very careful to choose different styles and times. We then submit our choice to experts.

Consultation of experts

For the "Isle of the Dead", we submitted our choice to the art historian Florence Grivel, who gave us precious insights about the painting and its story. Katia Poletti from the Vallotton foundation and Raynald Métraux both offered their knowledge to help us for the second episode. As for Paul Klee, we were invited to his foundation in Bern. A reliable information source is the utmost importance when working on the transposition of an artwork - in order to make a good reproduction, you first need to understand.

Writing

Avec ces précieuses informations, le travail d'écriture peut commencer. Comme tout est nouveau avec réalité virtuelle, l'écriture se fait en plusieurs aller-retours entre le texte, écrit par Yann Marguet, le son réalisé par Jérémy Conne et le visuel. En effet, en réalité virtuelle, le regard est guidé par le son spatial, par la voix du narrateur et finalement par l'image qui entoure le spectateur. Une fois que le bon mélange est trouvé, la production peut démarrer.

With valuable information, the writing process may begin. Since virtual reality is an emerging domain, the writing has to be a back and forth collaboration between the text, created by Yann Marguet, the sound elaborated by Jérémy Conne and the visual design. In virtual reality indeed, the spectator's eye is guided by the spatialized sound, by the narrator's voice and of course by the visual. Once the perfect mix has been found, production may begin.

Production

We designed the movie with Unity, a developer software able to make not only video games but also animated movies. The main advantage is the instant visualisation of the work, whereas traditional 3D softwares take a long time to render an image. The interaction with an application is also way easier.

TECHNICAL AND ARTISTIC CHALLENGES :

The project gave us several challenges,

First, the ambiance conveying a mysterious message needed to be kept – as dark as fascinating. Second, we had to recreate with great caution some missing parts of the island: Böcklin didn't paint them, because they were hidden behind cypresses or in the shadows of the cliffs.

Reconstitution of the missing parts

To achieve this, we used others parts of the painting, and even some other Böcklin's works. The lights in the shadowy parts needed to be balanced, we had to flatten surfaces with perspective, redraw or recompose several parts like one would do for a digital restoration.

Then, we applied those textures to a 3D model.

Accurate rendition

The final rendition had to be as close as an oil painting, which has nothing to do with realism. Different process have been tested. In the end, we chose to recreate oil painting textures from high-resolution images of Böcklin's artworks. We only used these reliefs to give volume to the digital brushstrokes. Just as you look the reflections of an oil painting lit by the museum.

The spectator takes the place of the dead

Artistically, the artwork's theme is fascinating. We ignore what precedes the painting, nor what's beyond. The character, dead, moves inevitably towards its grave as if it were guided by duty or a logic exceeding our understanding. Just as when you watch a 360° movie. The spectator is free to look at whatever he or she wants, though there's no choice in the path. The spectator takes the place of a deceased person waiting to pass to the other side, guided by the movie towards the Isle of the Dead, towards the unknown.



WHAT'S NEXT :

Besides the release of the "Isle of the Dead" and its presence at the GIFF, two more episodes are planned for the beginning of 2018. The second episode will present Les intimités (The intimacies), a series of xylographs depicting the life of a couple at the end of the 19th century.

The third episode will approach the work of Paul Klee and his relationship to the war. He was expelled from

DNA STUDIOS :



Founded in 2013 by four friends, DNA Studios is a company situated in Bulle, Fribourg canton. As specialists of the digital field, they work in the areas of animation, cinema and computing. Their competences associated allows them to produce and direct animation movies, video games and other digital experiences. They alternate between movie projects ("The Sunboy", of Fascinahouse, "Fierce" of Folimage), video games (Datak, of RTS, Antyz of DNA Studios) and sometimes both ("Sequenced", of Apelab). They love projects mixing animated art and education. DNA Studios collaborates with RTS on the serie "Unframed".

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"Unframed" website :

<http://rts.ch/hors-cadre>

Festivals :

Locarno La Rontonda, 2-12 août 2017

GIFF Genève, 3-11 nov. 2017

IKW Winterthur, 7-12 nov. 2017