

Interview with Marc Gruber-Laux - *PURE* 09 June 2008



Could You please say a few words about Yourself. What is Your educational background, main interests. How did You become involved in 3D?

My name is Marc Gruber-Laux and I am one of the three partners at Pure, as well as the managing director. I studied Architecture at the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, the city where Pure founded. Even during the studies my main interest was not of building construction, but more of how to bring the spirit of the design to an atmospheric and emotional level. There is a sensuality in architectural language that I always wanted to bring alive, even before it's been built.

Could You please tell us a little bit about the Company You work at. What kind of services does it provide? What is its target market?

Pure is part of a group that also includes Alpha Vision and Meduzarts. Each company has a different focus on the industry. The main focus of Pure is on Architectural renderings and animations. Our clients include Architects, Designers, Developer and Agencies. Pure's major markets include the USA, Europe and Middle East with a focus on cities like New York, Miami, Las Vegas, London, Berlin, Dubai, etc. Every place where Architecture needs marketing....

What position and responsibilities at Company are delegated solely to You?

As the Managing Director, I am responsible for the business and artistic development of Pure. Including strategies for new markets, marketing and global artistic direction.

Please describe the people You work with. What type of skills in Your opinion will be needed more and more? How would You like to see the team developing?

The talents that work at Pure are a mix of 3D Artists, Designers and Architects. Each with a special focus within the process. Pure can best be described as a boutique firm - we are a good size and don't need to divide often into smaller teams. Therefore, everybody is always aware of what is going on most of the projects. We have several Project Managers in addition to Team Leaders to control and structure the workflow. But as we grow, we create more and more teams who work as a division within the office.



Do You know right from the start how the 3D visualization process will be organized and how will the tasks be distributed or is each project developed individually for itself?

Of course every project has its own momentum and needs to be treated unique. But in general we have a very strict global structure: The Project Manager structures all info, plans the resources and timelines and is responsible for the client communication. After a kickoff meeting, the project is given to the production team. The Team Leader is responsible for the technical aspect during the process. An Artistic and Technical Director support the team during the project.

Which is the starting point in a project around which everything else evolves?

A Kick-Off meeting with the client and talks within the teams.

What is the most difficult thing to do within the working process? Which are the most cumbersome or time-consuming tasks?

In our field it is especially the development of the atmosphere in the scene and to create the very fine details. This is always different on each new project. What worked perfectly for one project, can be wrong on another. To find this “magic point”, what makes a project special, is always very challenging. The most time-consuming part of the project is often the review rounds. Especially when the projects gets photorealistic. Clients often treat renderings as photos and are very picky on every detail.

Are there stages within the working process, which have to be remade or redone over and over again until the desired result is achieved? What does such additional remaking mean in terms of resource consumption (personnel, time, computing power)?

Normally, the initial stage which includes mostly modeling, shading and light set up, is a pretty fast process . This stage is about 80% of a project. It is often the last 20% of the project that is the most time consuming. At this state, we may have an enormous amount of previews to generate through for the review rounds and each image must be in its highest quality. With dozens of projects simultaneously in the pipeline a stable and reliable renderfarm, and an application like V-Ray is essential.

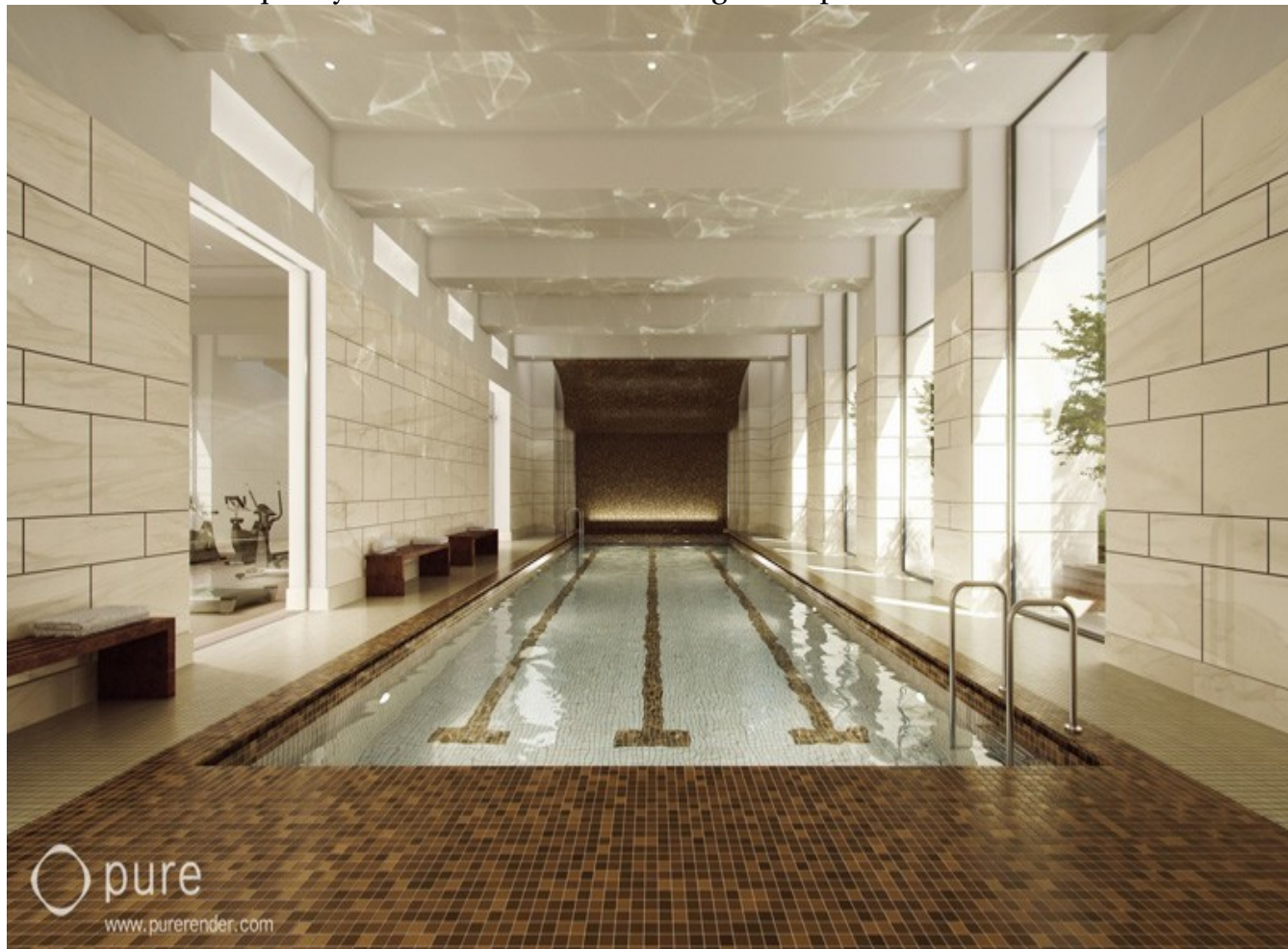


Please describe some of your latest and most interesting projects, which required the use of 3D modeling and/or 3D CG animation?

The last work that reached a bigger audience was surely the animation “The Renaissance”. Our goal was to create a contemplated atmosphere that fit the sensuality of the architecture of that scene. The music is a Choir piece from the age of the Renaissance and underlines the mood that we wanted to create. Very important were all the subtle details - Each piece of wood of the floor was modeled, we created many “secondary movements” which are not visible at a glance, but they are felt in the scene, etc. The render times were pretty high as we even rendered the depth of field and motionblur directly in V-Ray. The advantage is that even in the reflection we have the depth of field effect. These are exactly the details we want emphasized.

For which of the projects did you use V-Ray? Could You please say a few words about each of them and the people behind the work?

Actually 95% of our work is rendered with V-Ray. But especially for animation projects, the Balance between quality and rendertime is amazing. The optimization is brilliant.



Which is Your favorite project? Why?

Can't say. All are very special and unique

As a V-Ray user, could You please tell us what made You select our renderer the first time? Any specific feature? How would You compare V-Ray's performance to that of other renderers?

Speed, quality and reliability. These are the most important factors. V-Ray has the best optimization to combine all three points.

How do You decide when to use V-Ray, for which projects? In what way does switching from another renderer to V-Ray affect the working process?

We use all applications as tools. At the beginning of a project we have a vision in our minds, which we want to turn into reality. Then we take the tools that help us to fulfill this vision 100%. I hate it if I am limited by a tool. For instance, if I want to put a nail in the wall I choose a hammer and not a screwdriver. But many tools in 3D business unfortunately are limited that way. Also here V-Ray gives us the best options to bring us to the wanted 100% and beyond.



How easy is it to switch from the standard built-in renderers to V-Ray?

V-Ray is very well structured and the GUI is very logical and easy to handle. To switch from a built-in renderer should be quite easy. But this is only a guess as we worked with V-Ray right from the start and actually never really considered working with another renderer for most of our projects

Would You like to high-light any points in this process or make any recommendations in this regard to the developers of the renderer?

The clean and fast GI of course is one of the most important points in arch renderings. There, V-Ray is in opinion still unbeatable. The G-Buffer is another feature that became very important for all of our projects.

How much pressure is exerted on Your creative team in terms of innovation and the setting of or keeping with the latest trends on the market?

This is a very essential point. The technology should never limit a result that you or the client have in mind. Therefore, it is important to use the technology with all options and possibilities. Being informed on the latest improvements in technology is key to staying ahead of your competitors.



What new features would You like to see in V-Ray? Is there a process/feature, which You think might help Your work if it is integrated within the renderer?

- Real BSDF shader structure (rather than Blinn/ phong optimizations)
- More settings for physical sky system. Red / blue shifting, saturation, haze, distance fog etc.
- Possible conversion of displaced objects into geometry
- AA settings on a per object basis
- Maximum distance for vray lights
- Adjustable IOR curves, different curves for different wavelengths
- Support for the new 3ds max frame buffer and support for subset pixel shader

How do You see the future in what you do? Is there an aspect of the working process, which in Your opinion can be really innovated or rationalized?

The next step is real time in the highest quality. Clients are used to getting an image or even an animation in photorealistic quality. In real time it is still not really the case. A client would never sacrifice the used quality because it is in real time. This is the new border and challenge.

Would You like to make any recommendations or give some advice to the visitors of our site? Is there anything else You would like to add?

no, not really. Maybe just test V-Ray and be convinced :-)

We thank Marc Gruber-Laux for this interview and we wish him and his team good luck on the future projects!

