

# Important Looking Pirates on **WESTWORLD**

Images courtesy of Important Looking Pirates

**Studio:** Important Looking Pirates / VFX - Film, TV  
Stockholm

**Project:** WestWorld

**Autodesk Solution:** Maya, Arnold, Shotgun

With a small team varying from 5 to 15 people, Important Looking Pirates (ILP) delivered Emmy-winning VFX work on HBO's "Westworld." With **Maya** as their go-to tool, combined with **Arnold**, plus **Shotgun** to help tie it all together, they challenged themselves to exceed expectations and produce shots of the highest quality.

## CHALLENGES

- ILP journeyed into unfamiliar territory to take on such **complex characters** as a young Anthony Hopkins, Robot Boy, and Dolores.
- Setting the bar higher than ever, the team committed to producing **the most convincing effects** to help drive the story.

## SOLUTIONS

### Maya as a foundation to tackle the unknown

Two sequences were particularly tricky and required extensive modeling and rigging work. In episode 6, Robot Boy's face opens up to reveal his robotic skull. They explored a few different techniques and ended up transitioning to a full CG render of the whole head as the face opened up.

“*Maya is a great multi-tool where you can do a wide variety of work. It is our go-to package for the majority of our work.*

-Bobo Skipper, VFX Supervisor

In the last episode, for Dolores' mechanical body, they needed to test and tweak all of the modeled parts to make sure she could move like a human. Part of this challenge involved designing and placing hydraulics so she could lift her arms and legs freely.

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## Using Arnold to achieve just the right look

One of the most complex shots involved face replacements to create a young version of Anthony Hopkins as Dr. Ford. “Nailing the model, animation and look on Young Anthony was the biggest challenge. In the end it came down to lots of iterations and attention to detail,” says Skipper.

““ For all the character work on Westworld, we used Arnold. It’s perfect for preserving detail in skin shading and also handles hair/fur very efficiently.

-Bobo Skipper, VFX Supervisor

When it came to skin shading, they mostly used the Anders Langlands alShader for Arnold. Shaders were tweaked using ILP’s proprietary light rig in which they were able to develop the look in a range of balanced light scenarios. Final tweaks were made in a shot context to make the skin tones blend in with the stand-in actor on the plate.

## Shotgun for Project Management

ILP has used Shotgun as a base for project management for over five years. It’s grown with them as they’ve built highly customized tools to integrate their workflow. In fact, much of their pipeline was developed around it.

## BENEFITS

**Power** The powerful combination of Maya’s deep toolset and Arnold’s ability to handle complex rendering challenges gave ILP what they needed to produce intricate effects and out-of-the-ordinary sequences.

**Flexibility** Extensive opportunities for customization in Maya, Arnold, and Shotgun, have made it easy for ILP to adapt their pipeline and meet the needs of different types of work.

**Ready for anything** As they look to expand the type of work they take on and to take their studio to the next level, ILP is equipped with the production-proven tools they need to push their creative boundaries and achieve stunning results, faster.

*Find out more about Important Looking Pirates’ work on Westworld on [AREA](#).*

*Get access to the creative tools used by top visual effects studios with products available in the [Media & Entertainment Collection](#).*

*Learn more about [Maya](#), [Arnold](#) and [Shotgun](#).*



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