

Image Courtesy of GMUNK

GMUNK CREATES MESMERIZING FLUID SIMS WITH BIFROST

Visionary Digital Artist and Director, GMUNK (aka Bradley Munkowitz), is a world-renowned creative with a design-driven style and unique aesthetic that blends psychedelic themes with rich textures and palettes. We sat down with him recently to learn more about “The Living System,” his recent project with Z by HP, and how he created nature-inspired fluid simulations using Bifrost.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR ART

I’ve honed my skills as a creative professional for the past 21 years across mediums, including photography, live action, experiential design, sculpture, various forms of installations, graphic design, and motion design. My ethos is founded in design and influenced by optics, which means that all of my creative work is informed by photographic and cinematic visual elements.

My work is very atmospheric, frequently inspired by nature, and often explores metaphysical themes, incorporating abstract planes and vibrant, psychedelic palettes.

CAN YOU DISCUSS ANY HIGH-PROFILE PROJECTS YOU’VE WORKED ON DURING YOUR CAREER?

I’ve designed interfaces and holograms for many feature film projects, including sci-fi titles for “Tron: Legacy,” “Oblivion,” and “Kin,” and the upcoming sequel “Top Gun: Maverick.” I also designed the Windows 10 Desktop, which has been the most successful image campaign in Microsoft’s history and has been seen by over a billion people worldwide. Another recent project I directed is the short black-and-white film “BOX,” which combines projection mapping and robotics to achieve a unique visual experience.

For the past number of years, I've been working with Z by HP as a Global Ambassador, where I revisited Maya, refreshed my 3D artistry skills and created a chapter for the 2021 short film "[The Living System.](#)"

CAN YOU GO INTO MORE DETAIL ON "THE LIVING SYSTEM?"

"The Living System" is a short film and collaborative effort between all seven Z by HP global ambassadors, where each of us explored new ways to push the boundaries of our art and creativity. The inspiration for the film was derived from the elements and nature, which are major influences for my personal art and have been especially relevant throughout the past year. With COVID-19 closures and restrictions, nature has truly been one of the only places that we've been able to go out and take a walk, hike, find spiritual respite, soul search, and cleanse our visual palettes. The film dives deeper into nature and portrays the perfect energy system that we all share and are able

to tap into for creativity. It starts at a molecular level and builds through different stages of water, air, plants, landscapes and vast cityscapes overgrown with lush wildflowers. We came up with the concept as a creative exercise, but we knew that by taking on such an ambitious project, there would be a lot of amazing content produced that we'd be able to share with the world.

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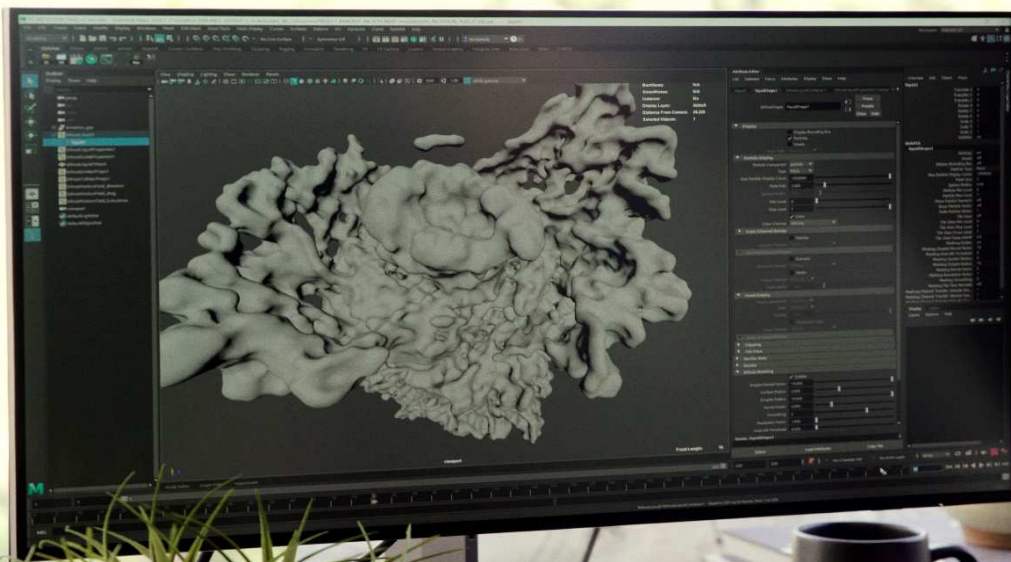




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WHAT IS YOUR CHAPTER FOR “THE LIVING SYSTEM” ABOUT?

My chapter follows Alex Trochut’s journey through the cellular world and explores nature in its infancy. I used a water and smoke system with sharp terrains and striking lighting to go below the surface and portray energy as it swells and prepares to manifest in beautiful ways.

HOW DID YOU USE MAYA AND BIFROST ON THIS PROJECT?

Following an extended hiatus from 3D work to focus more on design and directing, I picked up Maya again and learned Bifrost for “The Living System.” My chapter was influenced in part by the high-speed cinematography work I do shooting at 1,000 FPS with a Phantom. Building on that, I set my scene in Maya to 1,000 FPS to capture these fluid, slow-motion 3D simulations developed with Bifrost. I wanted to make a portal of water, so I created the sim with a shape spiraling around it, and then animated strobing light sources behind it.

I used Bifrost to sketch with water, and it was really the only way I could make this happen. By capturing my high-speed cinematography work in 3D and creating these meshes in Bifrost where everything is connected, I was able to achieve these beautiful sculptures of frozen moments in time.



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HOW ELSE HAS YOUR LIVE ACTION WORK INFLUENCED YOUR 3D ART?

When I’m on a live action set, I have a Pelican Case of filters for the lenses, including filaments, prisms and diopters to create a very unique look. I also strive to create this aesthetic when I’m working in 3D.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE MAYA FEATURES?

The simulation process in Bifrost is freeing and the most dynamic, and it plays back wonderfully fast. I love simulation art and getting lost playing in 3D (it kind of makes me feel like a wizard – and it’s super fun!). Maya has come a long way since I started using the program almost 20 years ago. The customizability of everything, the shelves, the interfaces and docking is incredible to work with.

IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE FOR EMERGING ARTISTS OR STUDENTS JUST GETTING STARTED?

Learning, experimenting, and growing as an artist are always the most enjoyable and rewarding parts. Creative adrenaline is released when you’re uncomfortable, and there’s beauty in that when you’re working hard to achieve that lightbulb moment. Moving out of your comfort zone and pushing out of your boundaries is part of the creative process – and how masterpieces are achieved.



Learn more about “The Living System” and go behind the scenes with the artists [here](#). For more information on GMUNK, visit: <https://gmunk.com/>.

