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## 25 A Moment of Pixar: Rick Sayre Interviewed by Gloom

Gloom, Thu 06 Mar 2008

# A Moment of Pixar: Rick Sayre Interviewed

By Gloom of ExcEss

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During our outreach-trip to San Francisco, we sat down for a quick chat with our host of our day at Pixar Animation Studios, Mr Rick Sayre.

**ZINE: How long have you worked at Pixar and what do you do here?**

**RS:** I have been at Pixar 21 years; yes, that's a long time. My official title is Supervising Technical Director, which means that when I'm attached to a film, I am the overall supervisor for the entire technical crew on the show (note: show is a moviemakers term for film).

At the moment, I'm involved in pre-production on a film I unfortunately can't talk about.

**ZINE: Fair enough. Could you give us an example of something you might do on a normal day?**

The Pixar visitors badge - A stranger from the outside!

**RS:** Sure. I'm also working with color and grading for the studio - how we make film (note: that stuff with holes in the sides and images in the middle) tweak the final colors, master the images for our various deliveries such as Blu-Ray and Digital Cinema, and so forth. In addition to that, I also work with the other supervisors in an attempt to chart a course for the studio which makes sense long-term.

**ZINE: Since you have been at Pixar since the beginning, could you tell what the start-up was like?**

**RS:** Small, intense, free-wheeling and idealistic. When I started here, you could fit the entire company in one room, and everyone knew everyone.



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**ZINE:** Let's talk a little bit about the movies.. how long does it take to make a Pixar animated feature film?

**RS:** Each film is different of course, but the films typically take four to five years from start to finish, with a very small team at first. It's more like a year of full-on work once we have a full crew.

**ZINE:** Pixar is known for their short films as well, and it appears to the outside world that these are labors of love and a lot of fun for the crew. Is this in fact true, or do you approach the short films in the same way as feature films?

**RS:** Those aren't really contradictory statements - the features themselves are labors of love. But it's true that the short films are more deliberately altruistic - there's no direct box-office reward, we do them for the love of the medium, and to give talented folks with a good idea a chance to make a film without the pressure of a feature.

**ZINE:** Now let's touch on the demoscene issue - is it a well known phenomenon amongst the people working at Pixar?

**RS:** There is indeed a small underground group of ex-sceners here, but there are also plenty of people who have never heard of the scene (note: although far less now since you've done the outreach event!). There's also folks with a background or interest in other aspects of the underground electronic art scene, such as interactive art and experimental theater. Pixar is a large and diverse company.

"There is indeed a small underground group of ex-sceners here"

**ZINE:** On the topic of diversity - anyone who has seen any of the making-of features you guys include with your releases know that there is plenty of fun to be had around your offices. Any examples?

**RS:** Sure! You might have heard of our annual paper-airplane contest, but we also have an annual Motorama where people show off their custom cars, and an increasingly elaborate Halloween costume contest as well.

Many people take customization of their office to impressive lengths; one individual has a secret door activated by pulling a book off his bookshelf, behind which is a miniature speakeasy. Also, the animation department has their own pub, the Knife and Fiddle,



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complete with a few house bands.

**ZINE:** So the scene and Pixar does have many common traits then. Thank you for your time and thanks for inviting us to Pixar in the first place!

**RS:** Any time.