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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SquareTangle virtual art performance company launches with open source plug-in for artists and sound designers.

Renowned Australian virtual artists John McCormick and Adam Nash today announced the formation of SquareTangle, a virtual/art/performance company, as a milestone in their Australia Council Inter-Arts Connections Residency at Hidden Cove Solutions.

They have released the first results of this productive collaborative residency, in the form of a plug-in that allows the FMOD sound designer to be used within the Unity game development environment. FMOD is an Australian made library and toolkit for the creation and playback of interactive audio, widely used in the international games industry. Unity is a multiplatform game development tool. This plug-in allows sound designers to use the FMOD Designer tool to create sophisticated interactive audio designs that will work in Unity. Unity can be used to create multi-user 3D "worlds" on the Internet.

SquareTangle are releasing the plug-in open source under the MIT License that allows anybody to use and modify the plug-in for any purpose whatsoever. "We are very pleased to release this plug-in to the community. Open Source is a key strategy in the development of digital art because it harnesses the power of the community, sharing code and knowledge to develop innovative solutions quickly in response to relevant problems. Hopefully this plug-in will allow more Sound Artists and Composers to engage with 3D virtual space as a serious medium for art," Nash said.

McCormick and Nash formed SquareTangle when they started their Artists' Residency at Hidden Cove Solutions in July 2009 after being awarded a Connections Residency by the Inter-Arts Office of the Australia Council for the Arts.

Hidden Cove Solutions are a Melbourne-based telecommunications company with A-list clients. The aim of the residency is for the artists to work with the company's programmers to produce a software system that easily allows artists to work with a range of data sources and convert that data into the kind of audiovisual data that can be used in digital art, such as video projections, generative sound art and mutli-user virtual environments (MUVEs).

"Currently, if an artist wishes to work with a data source and modulate that into some sort of audiovisual presentation, they need to build the system from the ground up. Often artists do not have the programming skills or access to a programmer that would allow them to do that, and projects can get fatally distracted by that process. Ideally, our open source solution will make it much

easier for artists, and others, to capture and manipulate data sources, allowing them to concentrate fully on the considerations of art." Nash said.

Another chief project of the SquareTangle residency is to use their system to develop an immersive, interactive audiovisual performance that will be housed in a portable 10-metre dome with full-dome projection of 3D virtual environments and surround sound. The projected virtual environment will respond to the presence of people inside the dome, allowing an unprecedented level of interaction between audience, performer and virtual environment.

SquareTangle are working with Hidden Cove programmer, Charles Kong, to develop a reliable full-dome projection system using an off-the-shelf data projector and inexpensive acrylic hemispherical mirror. This is based on the work of West Australia-based mathematician Paul Bourke, who revolutionised the planetarium industry with his techniques for simple full-dome projection. SquareTangle have developed a technique for building simple inflatable domes from easily available materials, and they will be releasing these patterns and instructions open source on their website in the near future.

SquareTangle plan to tour the immersive dome show from 2010, after fine-tuning their virtual techniques at a FutureLab residency at the famed Ars Electronica in Austria. The artists will be posting developments of the residency on their blog at www.squaretangle.com/blog

Adam Nash was one of the artists to receive the inaugural Australia Council Second Life Artist In Residence grant in 2007/2008, from which BabelSwarm was produced. He is internationally regarded as one of the most innovative artists working in the virtual arena, with works shown all over the world, including peak festivals ZERO1SJ, ISEA, SIGGRAPH and The Venice Biennale. He was shorlisted for the National Art Award in New Media in 2008. John McCormick is one of the pioneers of motion capture and telematic dance. He was a founding member of the legendary Company In Space and Dancehouse Melbourne.

The artists are available for interviews. Contact <info@squaretangle.com>

Links:
SquareTangle www.squaretangle.com
Hidden Cove Solutions www.hiddencovesolutions.com
FMOD www.fmod.org
Unity www.unity3d.org