



Left: Raja Imran;
Above: Al-Daih Residence Concept;
opposite: Le Reef pool.



Bahrain in 3D

Just another computer genius: Raja Imran

He calls himself “just another CG artist” but no doubt an artist with a distinctive style. We asked Raja Imran what he envisions for Bahrain’s future skyline and a world of exciting 3D architecture opened before us...

Being a CG artist is the best thing that happened to me; it has made it possible for me to think beyond the traditional canvas, across the mediums used in traditional sculpture, and beyond the boundaries of anything that depends on the laws of physics. I enjoy my work like a kid enjoys to play.

The Great masters of the renaissance did pretty much everything from concept development to architecture. Though the new age brings a lot more to be grasped by the human mind; again I think of myself as an artist using modern day tools to get a grip on concept development, sculpture, architecture and the media itself.

Though it's just more than a year now in Bahrain, the cultural similarities between my homeland Punjab has made me feel at home since. It's amazing how you see the same

patterns and motives emerging from lands so distant physically.

I feel honored gaining my education from the National College of Arts where all the big names in art and architecture emerged. An art college of such a prestige in fact, connects you as a family with all the generations who have ever studied or taught there. I can only wonder what it would be like to be one of them someday.

A bridge between the artist and forefathers of art can only be felt within. I had an honor to see and be mesmerized by the art of Dr. Ahmed Baqer- a





“Using computer-generated arts to express a concept is just like selecting between a brush and a pencil. It’s not that an artist should be proud of how skillful he is with the brush; it’s what he creates from it.”

great artist of Bahrain and be a part of a studio called “Artfiction” which emerged from his passionate and pure inspirational strokes of graphite on paper. Primarily focused on the vision of Dr. Ahmed Baqer; Artfiction bridges your creativity to contemporary mediums, hence bringing along perfection and detail, polishing your ideas to a sparkle. Our goal is to break the net of commercialism and help talk about “Art” as is; with a touch of fiction. Artfiction was founded by Hanan Al Atuwī, Dr. Ahmed’s wife who is like an elder sister to me and is the spiritual link to the artist directing the team and keeping the goals more towards the arts side than the commercial.

Architectural Visualization

I did start off as concept artist for a gaming studio but my thesis in National College of Arts was in textiles. So it doesn’t matter what art form it is, as long as it fuels your creativity. It brings no harm to see a building as if it was a sculpture and the city layout as woven patterns...

With the boom in architecture, especially in the GCC, my 3D skills got me entangled commercially in architectural visualization, which I am proud of, and it was the reason I came to Bahrain in the first place. Yet again you can see a sculpture in the buildings I designed and implementation in my interiors of all the color researches I did during my studies.

Just Another CG Artist

What I wrote on my blog (www.rajnca.wordpress.com) that I am “just another CG artist” has two different meanings. One that CG art is a thriving and prospering art of the new millennium and you see so many artists using these mediums to express themselves. Secondly, using computer-generated arts to express a concept is just like selecting between a brush and a pencil. It’s not that an artist should be proud of how skillful he is with the brush; it’s what he creates from it.

3D Renderings

I have always used 3Ds Max and Adobe products but it again it does not matter what tool an artist is good at, it’s how he uses it.

Starting off with Blue Marine tower to be constructed in Juffair I have done a number of projects in Bahrain including MJM One tower, Rafa-al-Seeif building, Le-Reef Building on the Reef Island, and the Edamah- an office tower for the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. In fact, it was good to see so much of my work displayed in more than enough stalls on the last “Bipex” Exhibition.

Project Sneak Peek

It’s just a matter of company privacy that I cannot name the clients but you will be looking



Right: Bahria Town concept showing the masjid;
Above: Zam Zam residency concept; **opposite:**
Bahria Town concept showing a little Venice.

at Artfiction as a studio producing state-of-the-art content from Bahrain.

Market Slowdown

Yes the market is almost at a halt, but I consider it as an opportunity to put more effort in what we have rather than thinking of misfortune. It's a unique opportunity as any CG artist can guess to have ample time to work hard to groom himself and learn more rather than producing the regular work on an hourly basis. That's how a CG artist should think.

Building Concepts

It's not often that you find me designing a building since most of the time I'm sketching concepts for character and creature design. But, Burj Al Bahrain is what came to my mind thinking of the future skyline of Bahrain; that's why I placed it on the Lulu roundabout. An eighty plus story futuristic tower rises above the others and welcomes visitors to





“Sketching the concept of course is my favorite part of the process. Modeling in 3D can be my second most loved and enjoyable activity.”

the metropolis as what the statue of liberty does for New York. Babylonia towers standing in the middle of the sea between Juffair and Arad (connected just by bridges) had one single purpose of design, “what if every floor is a penthouse with its infinity pool on the terrace”. Both of the buildings are designed as if they will be build so they follow the rules of physics- what I mean is they can be built in reality. It's possible.

Bahrain's skyline

Bahrain does have a distinguishable skyline with the triangular WTC buildings and recognizable silhouettes of the Financial Harbour. And also there is a lot going on with the 2030 vision of Bahrain. Ideas are being pooled in about resorts and skyscrapers from around the world and there are definitive bridges to be built to connect the islands

with each other. In accordance with many of the presentations for the Government and the feedback from the government side, what I can foresee is that the future additions to the skyline, the reclaimed land and the islands will have more of local and cultural influence. They will also have more relation to the history of this land rather than being a checkerboard of glass blocks. This is the best that can happen to any country in this commercially influenced and corporately branded 21st century.

3D Visuals

Sketching the concept of course is my favorite part of the process. Modeling in 3D is my second most loved and enjoyable activity.

Realistic Impressions

I would not like the readers to get confused





Right: Burj Al Bahrain concept;
Above from left: Tuscan interiors; **opposite below:** Raja at work on his 3D characters.

in all the technical stuff but light does play an important role in making a rendering appear more realistic, and can change the same form to appear differently. Especially in videos the small elements of animated flags and flying birds can help though but what I can say as far as my experience with clients, dramatic shots and sunsets are the most sellers.

How long a rendering takes to complete depends on the level of detail and the resolution. It also varies if it's a still shot or a video rendering. A project as whole can easily range between a week and five months. It all depends.

But for every particular project, a definite timeline is quoted to the client after calculating the hours of work required.

Technology

We can be looking at all the Sci-Fi advancements shown in the Hollywood but what will change 3D is when computers can understand what a person is thinking... literally.

Challenges

Being part of the technologically advance world, putting your work out there (online) creates a challenge itself. The work has to be up to the mark or it's no use. So every step in creating a new concept or a shot from 3D is a challenge in the manner of it being new and better than its predecessors. I get quite frustrated in updating my blog every time I have something new to show; it's more of a mechanical process I guess and it does fall a bit in the self praising genre, and that's not me. What I would love to do though is add a tutorial section to help out all the new beginners. **AH**

*For more on Raja, you can visit his blog at:
www.rajnca.wordpress.com*

