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INTERNATIONAL

Scout & About

Posted: Fri., Sep. 28, 2012, 4:00am PT

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Former ILM artists revive shuttered shop

Scout & About: Northern California 2012

By TODD LONGWELL

As the longtime home of George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic, the complex at 3210 Kerner Blvd. in San Rafael, Calif., is hallowed ground in effects circles. But its legacy was tarnished when Kerner Optical -- the practical effects portion of the company that broke off from Lucas when he moved the digital effects portion of ILM to San Francisco's Presidio in 2006 -- filed for bankruptcy in 2011 amidst accusations of corporate malfeasance.

In January a company named 32Ten opened its doors in Building C on the site (formerly home to Skywalker Sound), completely divorced from the businesses that preceded it, but determined to draw on their vast legacy of talent.

"A number of the artists who had been doing work there were eager to continue to ply their trade," says 32Ten CEO Tim Partridge, who was prexy of Kerner Optical near the end of its run. "Some of my friends in the area were also looking to start their own business. Some wanted to do a CG business, some wanted to do a stage rental business and others wanted to some education, so we decided to put it all together under one roof and launch 32Ten."

The facility features a 6,000-sq.-ft. soundstage with a 60' x 30' greenscreen, a 138-seat screening room, a mix stage, wardrobe and makeup rooms, production office space, set fabrication services, a model and miniature shop and CG pipeline for compositing shots.

In its first two months of operation, it attracted a diverse range of clients, including Robin Williams, Kia, Cadillac, Polycom, US Cellular and the futuristic indie short "Neon."

In June, 32Ten launched its Professional Workshop Series with Models and Miniatures in a Digital Age, hosted by veteran ILM Model shop artist Fon Davis.

A handful of other production-related companies also have offices in Building C, including the commercial production entity GB Films, which recently enlisted 32Ten to rig a mechanism to launch a computer server off a building for a web video.



Effects aficionados should be happy to know that the San Rafael facility once owned by ILM, now called 32Ten.



The shop continues to work on stop-motion work in its model shop.



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"That's exactly the kind of collaboration we want to see happening," says 32Ten COO Greg Maloney. "Hopefully, if we have enough interest, we can expand the community into the next building (on the site)."

Scout & About: Northern California 2012

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