

Time to get real with computer animation



What is common to *King Kong*, *Gollum* and *Davy Jones*? They are all new age computer-generated characters that made scores of movie-goers cry, cringe and generally 'feel' for them. The success of visual effects is driven by rich detailing combined with compelling story telling. **Samir Hoon** from the house of George Lucas's *Industrial Light and Magic (ILM)* tells **Sandhya Soman**.

Let there be special effects, but keep them "real" so the audience feels connected, says Mr. Hoon, who grew up in India. Take the regal dragon, Saphira, in Warner Bros' big budget 'Eragon' for which he was the visual effects supervisor.

It has already been shortlisted for a 'Special Effects' Oscar.

"Essentially, visual effects are all the same — tool sets and terminology. But the difference is in putting the various images together with



Samir Hoon

attention to detail," he says.

Interacting with students at the Image College of Arts, Animation and Technology in Chennai on December 20, he showed clips of the mythical roaming pirate Davy Jones (*Pirates of the Caribbean 'Dead Man's Chest'*). Davy's part-octopus facial muscles with its multi-tentacled 'beard' faithfully followed every move made by Bill Nighy, who portrayed the character.

"I just wanted to let them (students) know how it is in real life ... give them a perspective so it can inspire them to make computer-

"The difference is in putting the various images together with attention to detail"

generated characters more real," said Mr. Hoon.

Visual effects, these days, are all about capturing the "real emotion" by tracking the motion from the actor and translating it on to a computer-generated character to which the audience is able to relate. "There is a generation that is growing up on cartoons, gaming and movies like *Krishh* and *Dhoom 2* that have done a fairly decent job."

According to Mr. Hoon, viewers would look for movies where animation is realistically blended with live action, animated stories told well and games that have increased the quality of visual complexity along with speed.

It is time to get real.