

Art in the palm of your hand

Bigger doesn't mean better for these AFC award winners.

By **JENNY SINCLAIR**

THE 1.44 Mb floppy may not be the coolest thing around, but gee, it's a nice size.

So say the entertainment mavens at the Australian Film Commission (AFC), who know about these things.

For the third — and final — year, the joint AFC/ABC Stuff-Art project has been launched upon the Web at <http://stuff-art.abc.net.au>, with every one of the eight winners small enough to fit on a floppy.

Stuff-Art is a hotbed of clever little animations, from artificial "species" to whimsical cartoons "exposing" the secrets of your friendly local ATM.

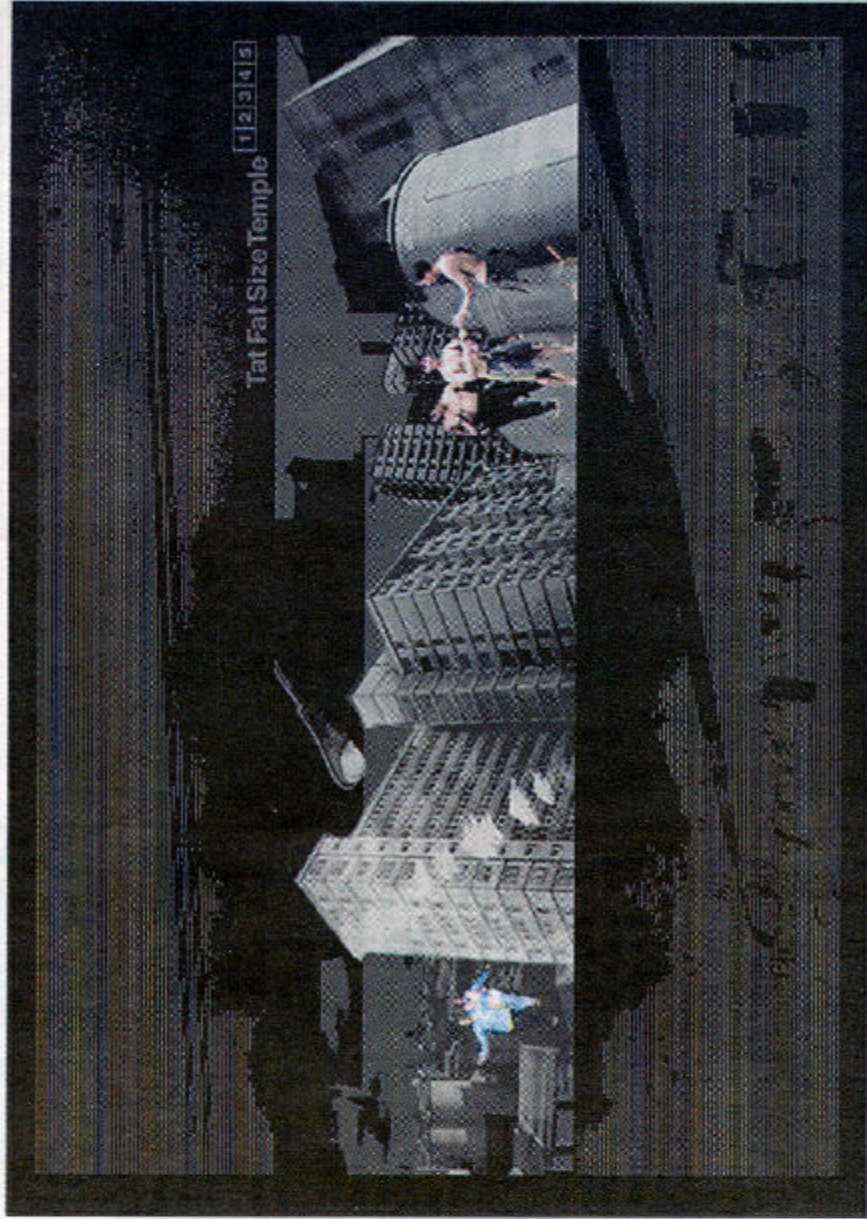
AFC interactive media project manager Andrew Traucki says it was a challenge for the eight winners to keep their projects within the limits and still come up with something "not only clever, but bug-free".

On a Web where not everyone has broadband, the limits were a way of keeping the focus on the art, he says.

"It was always designed to try to make people think of creative entertainment content — and interactive as well," he says.

"What I find a lot of the time on the Internet is that there's plenty of (information), but projects that you might view rather than watching the telly, or something you do just for enjoyment, there seem to be far less of those.

"The brief was always to try to get people to make something entertaining and engaging ... but yet accessible. They had to be small projects ... this is using the medium



Good stuff: an image from winner Toy Satellite's Tat Fat Size Temple Web project.

for its essence, which is interactivity, rather than trying to repurpose (other work)."

The constraints were particularly challenging, but also "quite useful" for one winning Melbourne team, Toy Satellite.

Toy Satellite's Andrew Garton has been interested in matching sound and motion for some time, and the Tat Fat Size Temple piece was the outcome of that.

Tat Fat Size Temple is a highly interactive work that uses special algorithms to vary the sound and

vision responses when users "visit" an environment modelled on the culture of Sarawak, Malaysia.

The work explores cultures in transition, using juxtapositions with Smith Street, Collingwood, to illustrate the changes foisted on the Sarawak community.

Toy Satellite used new software developed by Beatnik, a company associated with musician Thomas Dolby, to link the sounds and images in the work.

The project cost went over the \$5,000 prize money, but that was fine

with Garton, who saw it more as a chance to develop Toy Satellite's ideas. "For us, it's a prototype." The whole piece is only 850 kB, complete with sounds.

Garton is studying animation at RMIT, and the other three members of the Toy Satellite design team studied Media Arts or Creative Media there. Traucki said the RMIT link showed up in almost all of the winning projects — seven of the eight winners came from Victoria.

www.toysatellite.com.au