



**Digital Artist 2009**  
Mielke will be judging  
the Interactive Design  
category: see page 19  
for details

# My career so far

Creative director **Shane Mielke** discusses crossing the line from developer to designer, and why you don't always need a degree

**Shane Mielke won his first FWA Award back in 2003 for his personal portfolio site.** Since then, he's stacked up a further 24 FWAs, as well as six Adobe Site of the Days and a host of other awards for his interactive work.

A self-professed "Jack of all trades", Mielke has more than 10 years experience in web design and development, and specialises in UI design, Flash motion, ActionScript development, After Effects, XHTML, CSS and photography. "I've been a designer and creative director at 2Advanced Studios in California for the past five years," he says. "My core focus is on all creative and technical aspects that go into the design and development of interactive websites, but I'm slowly doing more digital art.

"I'm self-taught, so all my experience has come from working long hours, experimentation, and simply being very

observant of the different techniques and styles around me," he explains. "In my early years I never considered myself an artist or designer. My job was Integration/Development, and I worked closely with artists and designers, taking their visions and making them live and breathe by integrating them with HTML."

Mielke learned the business from the ground-up, forming strong artistic opinions and preferences as he did so, and developing a balance between being an artist and a developer.

"My web design style is very photographic with lots of depth, textures and realism; I don't like creating simplistic web 2.0 interfaces that are flat or vector-looking with generic drop shadows everywhere," he reveals. "My work tends to be very dimensional, with lots of elements combined into the scene. I like to create experiences that feel as though you could reach into the

monitor and touch everything. I've found that lately I don't need to look around to be inspired – it's all in my head," he adds.

"Working with such a broad spectrum of clients at 2Advanced – Adobe, Electronic Arts, Fox Sports, Nintendo and Warner Brothers, to name but a few – has really influenced the styles I'm capable of executing. I rarely get bored; on any given project I can design, animate and develop everything from start to finish. It's a lot of fun.

"I get excited about the interactive work I do because I'm constantly learning new techniques, styles and software. Things move very fast on the web, and you have to think on your feet to stay up to speed. Just knowing I could branch out into any type of digital art because of the things I've learned doing web design is both exciting and empowering." [www.shanemielke.com](http://www.shanemielke.com)

## Project Pixelranger

2002



This was the portfolio site that earned me a job at 2Advanced Studios. The 'Genesis Project' area was my first attempt at doing an 'experience' site. I imported photos I'd taken into Photoshop, fabricated new lighting situations and added tons of elements that weren't originally there. I also created a 3D sound engine, which rotated sounds around the user as they navigated the environments. I wanted to create a window into another world.

## Project VAST website

2003



The amazing music of the band VAST inspired me to create a site for them with a unique mood that was informational and experiential. I created several photographic scenes as backdrops for each section. I then took what I'd learned from the Genesis Project and infused life into each background, forming several unique and immersive environments. Interactive content, a UI and music were then laid on top of them.

## Project Nintendo: Metroid Prime Pinball

2005



I designed this experience around the concept of the site being playable, interactive and responsive, like the game itself. While exploring the content, the user is able to launch up to five Metroid pinballs into the interface. Periodically pinballs become locked and the user can relaunch them into the UI. Each pinball has a unique sound object that rotates and pans the audio around the user, heightening the overall experience.

## Project O'Neill Clothing

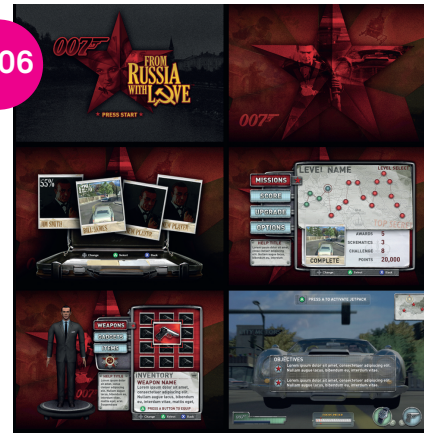
2005



O'Neill requested that their site contained no pre-loaders, no typical rectangular buttons, and a completely unique design and animation style for every page. Running with the directive to "think different" and be "random", I animated this project with elements that include a moose jumping out of a helicopter, dancing surfers, and a boat pulling a wakeboarder over content. There were also ants walking around the interface, and a video player displayed by a pair of hands that reached out, grabbed the player and shoved it at you.

## Project EA: From Russia With Love

2006



I designed and animated the entire in-game UI for this project, which was very challenging because of the memory, video and colour limitations of the Flash game SDK and of consoles at the time. Everything was kept very simple, but through dynamically generated animations and the use of game stats data, as well as looping background videos from the original movie, I created an immersive interface that was always in motion.

## Project Motorola PEBL

2006



The concept behind this site was to use the colourful new Motorola PEBL mobile phone to paint and bring a jungle environment to life. The scene starts in black-and-white; clicking and dragging the PEBL mouse paints colour back into the picture, and slowly reveals several audio layers, bringing elements such as flowers, shells, plants, fireflies, fish and waterfalls to life. Users can then capture part of the revealed background, send the image to their phone as wallpaper, and download the revealed audio as a ringtone.

## Project Adobe Max

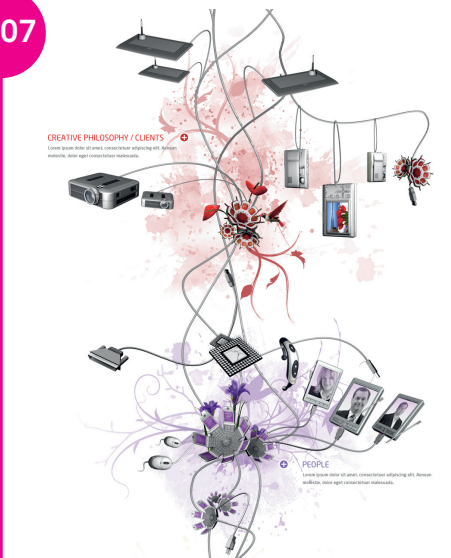
2008



2Advanced, Big Spaceship and Blitz joined forces with Adobe to create a special interactive and print campaign to promote their MAX conference. We brainstormed and created characters and an interactive storyline for the jungle scene, where the main character, Max the Explorer, had a creative idea that he couldn't achieve by himself. The user helps Max explore the environment, enlisting the help of the Photoshop cave-painters, Flash builder-chimps and Flex airbots to help him achieve his creative vision.

## Project Rapp Collins Worldwide: Future Garden

2007



The Rapp Collins Future Garden was the antithesis of your average corporate website. The user explores and scrolls up and down the vine, revealing a colourful garden made up of technology. A helpful hummingbird follows you around and even taps on your monitor when provoked.