

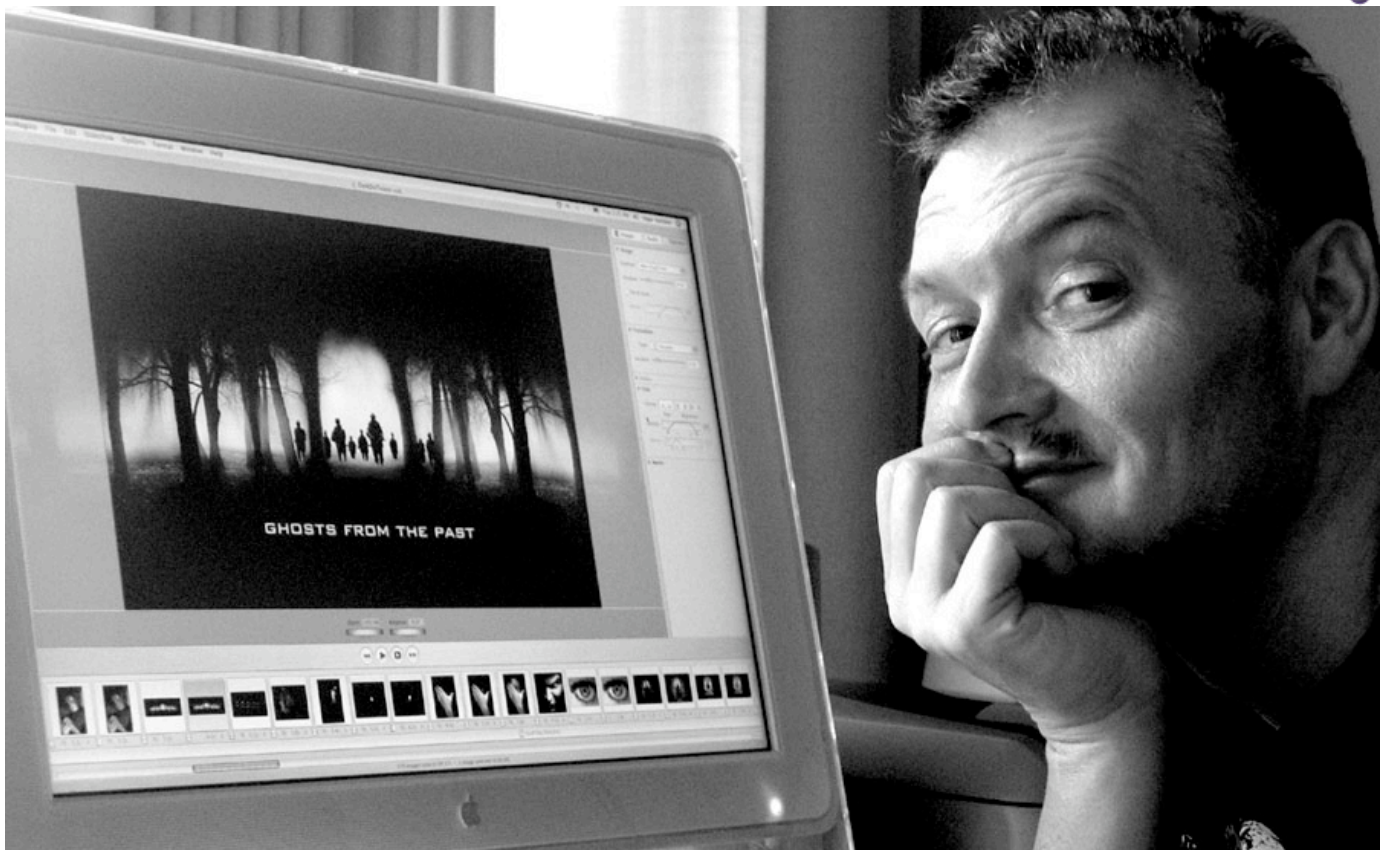
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FotoMagico goes Hollywood!

Victor Salva may be known for his undisputable contribution to the movie industry. What he is probably less known for is his enthusiasm for Boinx's award-winning software FotoMagico, which Salva uses in a most interesting and quite individual way: To present future film projects to Hollywood studio bosses and decision makers. In fact, so creative and skillful is he in operating FotoMagico that upon viewing his conceptual art presentations you almost find yourself in a movie theater right away, instinctively reaching for Coke and popcorn, leaning back and enjoying the show.

Text by Werner Nieke

One may or may not like his work. Some will love his films, others dismiss them as second-class. He isn't exactly an unknown quantity, but a rather controversial character on the international movie scene: [Victor Salva](#), renowned Hollywood director, writer, producer and actor.

But personal likes and dislikes set aside, you have to give the man credit for his stamina and artistic imperturbability: Starting his filmmaking career at the tender age of 13 and developing his chops by shooting self-budgeted shorts in his backyard, he caught the attention of no lesser a man than Hollywood's own [Francis Ford Coppola](#) in 1986, who financed Salva's very debut [Clownhouse](#). The release of this movie, being a result of his self-study approach to filmmaking, also marks his public appearance on the international movie bussines scene and initial public acclaim. In fact, Clownhouse remains a much sought-after video gem to this day.

However, a jump-started career in filmmaking at a young age couldn't tempt Victor Salva into abiding by Hollywood's pace as a movie factory. On the contrary, Salva took his time before releasing his next movie [The Nature of the Beast](#) in 1995, a melange of mystery thriller and Road movie. Starring [Eric Roberts](#), brother of lifetime legend [Julia Roberts](#), and [Lance Henriksen](#), probably best known as humanoid robot "Bishop" in [Aliens](#) and [Alien 3](#), the film depicts a fierce power game going on between the two protagonists in the Nevada desert. Other important milestones include [Powder](#) (1995) and [Rites of Passage](#) (1999), by which Salva ventured into different theatrical genres, albeit returning to the horror subject with [Jeepers Creepers](#) in 2001 and [Jeepers Creepers II](#) in 2003, the latter of which feature [Justin Long](#), the well-known "Hello, I'm a Mac!"-character of Apple's latest web commercials.

FotoMagico presents visual information in the same way a director tries to tell a story on screen.

Victor Salva

But let the man speak for himself and how he came to use FotoMagico in such a unique way as to prepare montages of films not even shot, yet:

Mister Salva, how did you learn about FotoMagico?

"I subscribe to a daily email newsletter issued by [Version Tracker](#) that lists programs to try and what they do. I read a line or two about FotoMagico and tried it. I do a lot of photography as a hobby and was looking for a way to present pictures and music. The first couple of picture montages I put to music with it were pure magic. I have been making films since I was thirteen years old. I have always marveled at the power of image and sound together. FotoMagico combined these two in a very simple, easy to understand format. *It was like heaven for me.*"



Did this initial experience with FotoMagico immediately spark the idea of assembling movie scene drafts and present them to film studios?

"I use what is called conceptual art and present it with text and music to help studios visualize the film that exists on the printed page, i.e. the screenplay. One of the great strengths of FotoMagico is to create a powerful moment by being able to move over an image, zoom in or out or even across. *It presents visual information in the same way a director tries to tell a story on screen:* The move creates the drama. The speed of the move, the shape of the move, in fact, all things FotoMagico gives you control over, create these moments with incredible ease."

How did studio bosses react the first time you presented your concepts in such a way?

"Any time you can give studio people something visual or something auditory, that is picture and music, it does two things: It demonstrates you as a visual storyteller, your command of image and sound - which are the so called "bread and butter" of any filmmaker - and it demonstrates your vision of the story you are asking them to let you tell. With the right music and image - which is after all what movies are and have been since the advent of taking pictures - you communicate to them something that inspires them. They can in fact almost "see" the finished production and are more likely to invest into something, which otherwise is just a script on a printed page. You could say you meet them halfway in creating the vision of the finished production. Otherwise you have to depend on their skill at reading the printed word and seeing it as a film. Or put it this way: My FotoMagico presentations remove much of the doubt and the speculation that comes with pitching a script or story idea to anyone. And I can tell you this: When you are in the room and show these presentations of sound and picture instead of just talking about the story, it has made a dramatic impression on people."

Is this kind of presentation a new approach?

"Very new. Before I did movie pitches I assembled photo montages with FotoMagico and would show them. They were stunning. The right music and the right image is a powerful thing. It is like poetry really, when it happens. A good way to describe what I love about FotoMagico is that it creates poetry. Or better: It helps you create the poetry in you."

FotoMagico helps you create the poetry in you.

Victor Salva

Do you know of other film makers presenting their movie concepts in such a fashion?

"As soon as my presentations become common knowledge, I would guess there might be quite a few. FotoMagico is affordable. This is another great point about the program. It is completely affordable. Even Spielberg Junior out there with money from his part time job could afford this program and get to work creating music and picture."

One might be tempted to think you could have accomplished a similar effect with Apple's preinstalled iLife Software Suite. Why not use iMovie HD instead?

"I liked FotoMagico. I knew how to use it. And it does something that these other programs can't do: It *gives you a very precise control over text and picture movement* and in a work space that is large and allows you to really see and feel each move and title. This lets you judge your work from moment to moment until you have it just right. Both things, text and picture movement, I needed to do quickly and simply, but looking great at the same time. Even as I learn Final Cut Pro and am attempting a project with it, I am still doing many sequences from it with FotoMagico. Which I will export and cut into the Final Cut Pro project."

My slideshows contain hundreds and even thousands of images.

Victor Salva

What about problems with the software?

"That's another great thing about your company: Your active responses to troubles and snags with the program. I don't think I have ever felt more supported by a software company than I have with you guys. When I had a problem, you guys were fast to help with it. I felt you were truly interested in my getting the program to work for me."

What's your top rated feature you'd like to see in a future version of the software?

"Well, there are a couple of things that would be helpful for me. For example, if the name of the image could somehow be presented whenever it is highlighted on the time line, that would be great, since sometimes *my slideshows contain hundreds and even thousands of images*. I am currently working on a FotoMagico project that has over 3000 images. Locating the right image by name quickly would make my authoring a lot easier."

Mr. Salva, thanks for sharing your experiences and ideas about FotoMagico with us.

Peaceful Warrior



[See a short clip](#) from the making of his latest movie [Peaceful Warrior](#) which he produced entirely using FotoMagico:

[Peaceful Warrior](#) Cast

- [Scott Mechlowicz](#) ... Dan Millman
- [Nick Nolte](#) ... Socrates
- [Amy Smart](#) ... Joy

[Peaceful Warrior](#) Facts

- **Opening Weekend:**
June 4, 2006
- **Production:**
March - April 2005
- **DVD Release:**
February 2007 (US)

[View Trailer site](#)

Conceptual Art



Here's how Victor Salva goes about making what he calls *conceptual art*:

I store all my original artwork in a large iPhoto Library, holding more than 20,000 items. Given FotoMagico's integration with Apple's iLife Suite I can quickly locate images, soundtracks and even spoken text and drag them into the storyboard. This works like a

breeze!

Once I've decided, which images and sound I'm going to use, I add titles to the individual slides. I animate both, image and text with the help of the excellent controls in FotoMagico, which allow me to apply motion in much the same way that moving the camera around would work. That way, studio bosses and decision makers don't have to use their own imagination when watching a given scene, but get the individual shot delivered on a silver plate - or rather silver screen in this case.

I have always admired my filmmaking heroes for their command of image and sound. Being able to make them work together to tell a story are the "bread and butter" of any director. FotoMagico gives you maximum control over images, sound and even text in a very easy to understand fashion. In fact, it works so intuitively that I decided to use nothing else for the production of the "Making of Peaceful Warrior".

Director - Filmography

- [Peaceful Warrior \(2006\)](#)
- [Jeepers Creepers II \(2003\)](#)
- [Jeepers Creepers \(2001\)](#)
- [Rites of Passage \(1999\)](#)
- [Powder \(1995\)](#)
- [The Nature of the Beast \(1995\)](#)
- [Clownhouse \(1989\)](#)
- [Something in the Basement \(1986\)](#)



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