

Mexican on team nominated for best animation Oscar!



*“I woke up today to the news that this **project I’d worked on for nearly a year** has been **nominated for an Oscar**,” Cruz Contreras tweeted upon learning that **“The Sea Beast”** has been nominated in the **Best Animated Feature** category.*

The **Tec graduate** is part of a **team of animators** at **Sony Pictures Imageworks**, and this is the **third time** that he has worked on movies nominated for an **Oscar** (which he’s **already received** along with others who worked on **“Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse”**).

*“It’s always very nice to get the news that **your work is nominated for an Oscar**. I think this year was even more special because of all the competition,” the Mexican animator told CONECTA.*

For this feature film, the graduate of the **Digital Art and Animation program** at the **Cuernavaca campus** was responsible for **animating parts of the characters**, such as **their hair and outfits**, along with **elements of the boats**.



His third Oscar nomination

Cruz, who hails from Iguala, Guerrero, confesses that he hoped his work would compete in the **95th Academy Awards**. However, he did not know exactly when the nominees would be announced.

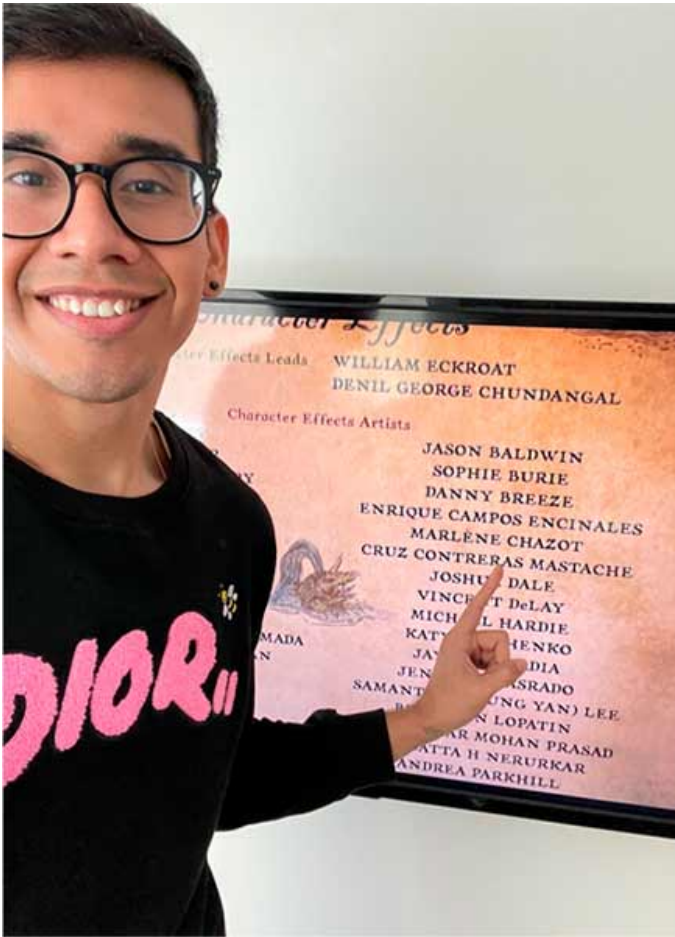
*“I’d just woken up, and then I saw a ton of messages on my phone. The first thing I thought was, ‘Who died?’ Then I saw one of the messages from a reporter saying: Can I can interview to you congratulate you on your **Oscar nomination for ‘The Sea Beast’?**”* he said with a smile.

The **Tec graduate** said he was excited and immediately went to confirm the news on the Internet. Although he confessed his surprise, Cruz knew the potential of the film, which is also nominated for the **Annie Awards** in six categories, including Best Animated Feature.

*“**‘The Sea Beast’** is now the third film to take the digital artist to the Oscar awards. His work was previously nominated for **“Over the Moon”** in 2021, and in 2019 for **“Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,”** which he won the award for.*

“What happened with ‘Spider-Man’ was crazy. I saw it coming, but you never expect it. When the Oscar presenters announced it was the winner, I had a very nice feeling, and yes, even tears.

*“Now with ‘The Sea Beast,’ **being nominated again is incredible**, especially this year when there are so many very good movies in competition,” Cruz said.*



The challenge in animating “The Sea Beast”

Cruz was finishing up his work on animation for “*Hotel Transylvania: Transformania*” and preparing to begin work on “*Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*” when he received word that he would be working on “*The Sea Beast*.”

“The Sea Beast was already starting to shoot. The artist managers told me I would be joining the team, and I was on it until the movie was finished,” he recalled.

For just under a year, the **Tec graduate** worked on the animation of the Oscar-nominated movie.

*“I had to **animate all the main characters**. I focused on their hair and clothes, as well as on things on the boat that had movement, like the sails and all the ropes, which are difficult elements to work on in an animated movie,”* he said.

The scene he most enjoyed animating was a fight involving a monster on the ship. *“The camera focuses on Sarah, a character I really like, and she shoots. It’s a very heroic shot and **I won an internal contest for it at Sony for best simulation shot.**”*

He also mentioned one scene in the film that was quite a challenge, one in which Jacob has a rope in his hand and has to hang on the Red Monster as if he were rappelling down it. *“It’s a shot that lasts about a second and a half, but it took a lot of work.”*

An animation globetrotter

The **Tec graduate** has been **working for six years** now as an animator for major movies in the city of Vancouver, Canada. However, achieving the dream of becoming a professional digital artist meant a lot of hard work, even **traveling the Americas** from top to bottom.

After finishing his studies at the Tec, Cruz traveled to Argentina to **specialize in dynamic simulations**, which is animation that works based on physics, such as clothing, water, fire, and particles.

Despite his experience, the 32-year-old artist says that he's never stopped learning. For his work on "**The Sea Beast**," he recorded himself, studied, and even watched pirate movies to know how to bring the digital universe to life.

"You need a lot of reference material. I've recorded myself wearing very similar clothes, and in this case, I had to see how the ropes and sails on boats worked," he added.

"With The Sea Beast, being nominated again is incredible, especially this year when there are so many very good movies in the competition."

Today, Cruz is a **senior animator** at one of the most important production houses in the film industry, and although animated movies have their own category at the **Oscars**, he believes that "*animation isn't a genre but a way of telling stories.*"

"I think that just as you nominate a movie for best animated film, you could also nominate it for best director, best cinematography, and best film overall," he added.

The **95th Academy Awards** will take place on March 12, when the movie the Tec graduate animator worked on will compete against movies such as "*Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*," "*Turning Red*," and "*Pinocchio*" by Mexican director **Guillermo del Toro**.

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