

Alain Fournier Award for the best Canadian Computer Graphics Dissertation

On August 14th, 2000, Dr. Alain Fournier passed away. He was a leading international figure in Computer Graphics, and a strong and frequent contributor to the Graphics Interface conference. His insights, enthusiasm, wisdom, vast knowledge, humour, and genuine friendship touched everyone he met.

The “Alain Fournier Memorial Fund” was created to celebrate his life, to commemorate his accomplishments, and to honour his memory. It rewards an exceptional Computer Graphics Ph.D. thesis defended in a Canadian University over the past year. The winning thesis is selected through a juried process by a selection committee consisting of accomplished researchers in Computer Graphics.

This year, Michael P. Neff is the inaugural recipient of the “Alain Fournier Ph.D. Thesis Award”. His thesis, entitled *Aesthetic Exploration and Refinement: A Computational Framework for Expressive Character Animation*, combines physics-based and kinematic animation tools that allow an animator to specify more easily expressive aspects of human motion. It spans the areas of graphics, biomechanics, robotics, and the performing arts. It uniquely draws inspiration from the literature and practice of the performing arts to motivate “expressive” animation primitives for synthetic humans. Its historical overview on the lessons we should take from the Arts into Computer Animation makes the thesis worth reading on its own, even if we were to ignore its substantial technical achievements.

Michael completed his B.Eng. at McMaster University, and his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Eugene Fiume. Currently, Michael is doing a postdoc with Hans-Peter Seidel at the Max-Planck-Institute for Computer Science in Germany, and he will be taking up a faculty position at the University of California, Davis, later this year.

For more information about the “Alain Fournier Memorial Fund”, and information about donation, please visit <http://www.cs.ubc.ca/~fournier>